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THE

BENGALEE

OR

SKETCHES OF SOCIETY IN THE EAST.

A NEW EDITION.

45849

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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CALCUTTA:

PUBLISHED BY AND FOR W. RUSHTON.

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1843

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ADVERTISEMENT.

These volumes are offered by the Publisher as a new Edition and Selection of Major H. B. Henderson's Series of Anglo-Indian Sketches and Tales, which, under the title of "THE BENGALEE," were printed in England in 1829. To these are added some later Sketches from the same pen; the whole having originally appeared, with a few exceptions, in the "*Oriental Observer.*"

They were intended as illustrations, and slight general pictures of society and manners in India. It is hoped, they still present the same faithful

delineation—with the advantage of preserving, at the present time, the record of certain traits, which are now growing somewhat obsolete, under our increasing intercourse with Europe, and the hourly changing state of Anglo-Indian society.

Calcutta,
15th April 1843.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
First Love,	1
Fate of Accomplishments in India,	13
The Fugitive,	25
Myself,	62
Mary Ashforth,	75
The late Marquess of Hastings,	95
Humbug,	121
The Mofussil—Chapter the First,	134
The Mofussil—Chapter the Second,	178
The Mofussil—Chapter the Third,	197
A Scene at Auction,	220
An old Civilian,	241
The Half Hour.—A run against Time,	256
The Durbar,	277
The Mud Fort,	290

THE BENGALEE.

FIRST LOVE.

But soft!—whom have we here?

SHAKESPEARE.

If it has been the lot of any of my readers to gain admittance behind the scenes of a Theatre,—an Amateur Drury, for instance,—and to watch a poor Debutant for a few minutes before the opening of the scene, in all the trepidation of awaiting the fatal catch-word, which is to summon him to his ordeal, and bring him at once within the gaze and criticism of assembled hundreds! Be his courage what it may, or his assurance equal to that of a few gifted, and most happy individuals, still they must have observed his flushed

cheek, colouring through the rouge, the trembling of his knee, the hesitation of his advance;—and then listening to his first few sentences, have distinctly caught the false and forced articulation of his words. At this moment the kindly portion of the audience usually feel for him; and there is an odd, and certainly not very pleasant sensation, busy in the heart of not a few of his friends. But wait awhile; his confidence is abashed only, not destroyed; his courage hath only faltered, not wholly failed him. A single peal of applause calls him to himself; and treading more firmly and freely on the boarded arena, the same native assurance that brought him there at all, shines out undiminished in its brazen splendour, and our new actor soon struts his busy hour, as bravely and gallantly as the best!

Thus it is, though no youngster,—no maiden novelist, shrinking, yet sighing to see herself in print,—though no new and gentle Tyro in the "love-sick angle" of a newspaper;—thus it is, that even I feel, at first starting into notice,

and rashly stepping forward into public observation;—thus it is my cheek flushes, my fingers tremble; and, if eyes might visit me, in my interesting and awful predicament of inditing, so should I seem the poor and lowly symbol of

"Fit timor, et pavidâ trepidat formidine pectus!"

And after all it is no such trifling or exhilirating task, to throw one's-self irrevocably on the judgment, for mercy is out of the question, of a host of critics;—to know, that one fell sneer of condemnation may nip not only the budding hopes of all my anticipations, and crush my future most amusing lucubrations, but even doom their poor Author to the penalty of disowning his own handy work;—aye, and bid him cry out louder than any one else against his bantling, in the hope of preserving his then, too necessary, too desirable incognito. But I will not dwell upon so melancholy and unlooked-for a result. Let me rather hasten forward to kind greetings and approvals; smiles from fair readers, and gracious perusal from my more

grave and steady ones;—and at length, ere the BENGALEE shall have reached a green old age, may I burn to disclose *who* is the Author, and be restrained from the pleasing avowal, only by my own innate and most indomitable modesty.

This modesty, which I thus early allude to, and announce, has been my bane through life: its only blessing, that it has made me a retired observer of others, even while it inculcated its lessons through the sad medium of many a mishap; and it may not prove uninstructive or undiverting, if, in this first chapter, I offer a short account of my Indian life, or rather of the leading and controlling events of it. It will serve, at all events, to bring the BENGALEE and his readers to be better acquainted with each other.

I came out to India a few years after the close of the last Century; so I shall at once be recognized as no unworthy usurper, as to standing, of my style and title. But in what capacity I arrived, whether "in the service;" whether as a tall Scotch Cadet, eager for pay, staff-

facings and promotion; whether as an assistant to some great house of Agency, where time and usefulness to the "*Dear Sirs,*" may have advertised me into a two-anna share of their balance-sheet; or, whether as a ruddy-faced maker of Tirhoot and Kissenagur Indigo; all this must remain untold! Ere the BENGALEE shall have unwoven the tissue of his tale, the truth may possibly be gathered from his pages; but still by inference only; for our annual East India and Calcutta Directories are so good at indexing names, rank, standing, and avocations, that he might as well blazon forth his cognomen and titles at length, in capitals, as give the clue to a secret, which every red book would then unravel.

On my first arrival it occurred, that I was for some time detained in Calcutta, where I saw every body; was, I am sure, known to every body; and yet recognized by nobody. My letters of recommendation and other circumstances, procured me, at first, not a few dinners, where I sat silent, and little attended

to by those around me. My modesty never ventured to bow to my hosts and patrons elsewhere; and they, in their short-sightedness and reserve, seemed as little disposed to notice me. Thus it very naturally followed, that in a few months I had the full and undisturbed benefit of my own most particular society and reflections: and thrown on my own resources, I read much; wooed the Muses a little; and studied the Gamut, and Wragg's Flute Preceptor. Nay, I even bought a valuable Cremona at an auction, which I sedulously and noisily struggled with, till it brought me an impertinent chit from my next-door neighbour; and I was nearly paraded under the great tree of fatal celebrity, for my retort to this gentleman of too sensitive organs. In fine, I caught at all methods of domestic amusement, which a bachelor can resort to, and at length saw the vanity of them all; when it occurred to me, that, as a Benedict only, could a modest, grave, and unobtrusive young man like myself, hope to secure a home, or happiness, in

India. I pictured to myself a fond partner of my solitude; a blushing sharer of my evening buggy—an affectionate and prattling companion at my daily board—an enlivening angel at my home,—her sigh and every thought and wish the echo of mine; and to crown the blissful pencilling, there shone a pair of deep blue eyes, which ever came to mingle with the scene, and brighten over my sketch; till their blue beaming grew into a necessary, component part of the design:—nay, seemed the light, the soul, the centre of my picture.

To expound all this in due candour, it is necessary to detail, that I was a regular attendant at St. John's Church, which at that time had not risen to the prouder and more episcopal eminence of a Cathedral. In a pew not far removed from my seat, gleamed the most captivating glances that ever shone from the bright orbs of youth, gentleness, and beauty. They were immediately before me;—no wonder that they seemed at times to fall on me. Once or twice, methought, (and yet my

modesty is unimpeachable,) the return of their bright influence was too quickly renewed, and too lingeringly allowed to rest, to be altogether the result of accident. From that sad moment commenced my troubles; or, as at that delusive period, I so foolishly conceived, all that was dreamy and delicious upon earth. The Prayer book, alas! claimed not my perusal as it ought. Many an impressive inculcation of the Preacher lost more than half of its effect, for my eyes saw not the emphatic action of his arm, nor the look of convincingness that followed each rich flower of his rhetoric. The truth was, I fell desperately in love with the blue eyes before me, and hence all the fancyings and day dreamings which began to play the deuce with my bachelor habits;—hence my aspirings after matrimonial felicities, and my growing distaste for all present solitary evils.

"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind!"

so our immortal Bard declares; but I thought

very differently. It were impious to suppose that those bright blue eyes looked not love; aye, and that they looked not love at me! and though the saying may be true, that your grave and retired man is, after all, the most conceited and most self-upheld of all created beings, yet did I feel humbly assured that I was the happy subject of her thoughts, even as she proved so ceaselessly of mine. Many were my sleepless nights and restless days, till, at length, I wrought myself up to the determination of a speedy consummation of the matter. How to effect it was another point. I had soon found out the name and terrestrial abode of my blue-eyed charmer; nay, had brought myself boldly to gain an introduction to the family. If there be faith in glances, the fair Lucinda smiled on my first visit. To find myself so near my happiness was beyond patience or slow endurance; so, in less than a week (rather precipitate, it has since struck me, for so very modest a young man!) I indited on Bath paper a brief mention of my

pain; trusted my person was not disagreeable nor my views presumptuous; and concluded by entreating an early, and I would fain hope, a favourable answer to my prayer.

This note went off at half-past eleven precisely, on a hot and glowing morning of the month of May. "'Twas Love's own season!"

Woe's me! it was a wearisome and anxious time, up to past four in the afternoon, and yet no reply. Tiffen had been removed untouched. I had paced up and down my room till my feet refused their office; and yet when I flung myself despairingly upon the couch, in less than three seconds they had again to support me. My poor unoffending nails, too were bitten to the very quick! At last five struck, and with it came my Bearer with the dread decider of my fate. It was a large business-kind of a letter;—a half-official sort of packet methought, with huge bluff hand-writing; the very Omega to the Alpha of blue eyes. I opened it;—it was from the Father of my Lucinda:—"He had just returned

from Cutchery, and seen Mr. ————'s extraordinary application to his daughter, whose short acquaintance with Mr. ———— prevented the possibility of *her* acknowledging the favour. He trusted it would not be deemed uncivil his returning the note, which his family could only conceive to have been forwarded under error, and certainly intended for some other lady"!

An earthquake could not have produced a more sudden revolution in nature, than did this fell reply in destruction of my hopes. The bright blue eyes of former dreams were now changed to dark Gorgonic glances of aversion. I forswore all society, all intercourse; and but for an incident which occurred some years after, which brought me back to the world, in even kindlier and better mood than before, I should probably have remained the same sad and secluded misanthrope for ever.

The incident I have just adverted to, must form the subject of some future Chapter. My seclusion, however, was not altogether

unattended with benefit. The very quaintnesses and oddities of thought, which such a state gives rise to, are not without their worth;—nay, they may at times be instructive, or at least, amusing. We hang with the deepest interest upon the first remarks of a man relieved from long blindness; and though the paces of a late unridden courser may be unpleasing in their roughness, yet the steed is essentially improved, and oftentimes of better value for its run a while amid its own native pasture and retirement.

FATE OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN INDIA.

On her bestow'd
Too much of ornament. MILTON.

My introduction to my readers has already disclosed to them, that I am that most disconsolate of all earthly beings,—a confirmed Bachelor; and fast verging also to the hapless appellation of an old one! Like many others of the species, I am characterized by some, who do not know me intimately, to be somewhat of the same disposition, as the grave personage in Le depit amoureux,—"un étrange homme, et d'une humeur terrible." I was once written to, from the Writers' Buildings, by a round robin of young gentlemen, whose very Fathers were my contemporaries years ago, in Calcutta, to

beg I would enrol my name in a society of unfortunates, which they had established and brought together, under the designation of the JUWAB CLUB; and of which they graciously tendered me the chair!—nay, I was once gravely asked by a pert young Miss, if it was really true, that I so resolutely and unalterably *hated* the whole sex!

Thank Heaven! however, I *am* known to a few staunch friends, who have been pleased to find something in me, to counterbalance the seeming repulsiveness of my habitual reserve. These have discovered a warmth of heart, that would gladly repay them for their good opinion; and they can testify that I think more of my fair friends, than I would willingly confess; that I regret my present state of single blessedness, oftener than I would avow; and though I fain strengthen myself in my bachelor habits, and self esteem, by picking holes in the alleged felicities of my married acquaintances, yet the fabled Fox is shewn but too plainly in my criticising acumen; and

envy, melancholy to say, too often betrays its pointless assailment, in my every objection.

This present Chapter will be devoted to a one of my stoutest and ablest attacks; and as they are levelled at the Ladies themselves, let them answer them if they may.

It would seem with our fair ones in this clime, that when they once begin to think and act for themselves, and become their own mistresses, by safely arriving within the holy pale of matrimony, their first essay at independence is boldly to forswear those very arts and accomplishments, which had so aided to confer on them the distinction they enjoy, and which had raised them to the happy power of being able to please only themselves. They feel it at once necessary to pass censure on the officious and busy care of parents, guardians, friends, teachers and others; and with our motto, and in the words of the Epic poet, they conceive that these

> "bestow'd
> Too much of ornament, in outward view
> Elaborate."

Eager, therefore, to correct the error, they consign to merciless oblivion the entire fruits of a painful, and often very expensive course of instruction. The Piano, Harp, Drawing, and in fine, all the ornamental portions of education, are discarded as frivolous, and no longer interesting. Although the remembered instruments, or possibly newer and more costly ones, still prove the component parts of the fashionable household furniture, their sounds are to be awakened only by the hand of the stranger; while the oblivious mistress suddenly proclaims her own entire ignorance of their use, and deplores her newly acquired incapacity to touch them.

"I never play now," is the reply of more than half the married ladies of the community here, and I might add of the British Indian possessions. In the Mofussil some allowance may reasonably be granted, from the difficulty of preserving the proper means of continuing the accomplishment. At the Presidency, however, where no obstacles exist,

we might easily point out whole circles of the late most promising pupils of the first English teachers, whose fingers, during years of eternal practice, were busy only at Sonatas and Témas, who now not only decline to approach the Piano, but from utter desuetude, in a very few months, are borne out by fact, when they assert their inability to play. The Harp, every where, has some shew of excuse; and is assuredly a most troublesome and thankless instrument, to attempt to retain in proper tune or order. Like the other wished for harmonies of this life, some unhappy circumstance or other is always at hand to jar the hopes and endeavours of hours; something damps or destroys the chords. The faithless tie, on which so much, nay, all depended, which had separated, and again and again been coaxed into seeming union and obedience to our wishes, now harshly and irrevocably severs, where nothing can replace or reunite! And at length, after days of loss and vexation, the heart flies away in disgust, to other and easier

sources of enjoyment. It must be owned also, there is nothing on earth so melancholy, so truly doleful, as the disconsolate twang of a broken Harp string,—

"Ea lapsa repente ruinam
Cum sonitu trahit,"

moaning forth it's own sad tale of destruction, from within the unprotecting cover, or huge deal case in the corner! Again, it is almost politic in some fair follower of Orpheus, to abstain from the Harp. It's annoyances come too full and frequent for the wellbeing and equanimity of the temper, and it may be mercy to the poor bridegroom, that this same luckless and trying source of amusement be abstained from, even in the honey-moon. Yet I cannot conceive why the Piano is as early and entirely discarded, as it's sister instrument. It's chords are less frail and faithless; it's tones more true and lasting; and though it gives not the same opportunity for the display of commanding gracefulness as the Harp, still,

in sober seriousness I assert it, there is scarcely a more pleasing enjoyment in the hours of domestic relaxation, than that of listening to, and witnessing an unaffected, feeling, and lady-like performer on the Piano.

I was much amused, not long since, on the occasion of a morning visit to a good old matronly Mamma of my acquaintance. The two eldest daughters were hard by in separate rooms, and busily engaged in seeming unremitting practice. The eternal variations of two well-known tunes, up to the number of some ten or fifteen, were most perseveringly and unskippingly gone through: introduction, tema, variations, major, minor, finale, and all! They were not allowed, of course, to join us in the sitting room, partly that their practice might not be disturbed, but principally, that I was looked upon as an utter impracticable. The good old lady, however, was by no means unfriendly, or uncommunicative. She had a large packet, with half a dozen of closely written 'crossed and recrossed' Europe letters

before her; and graciously repeated to me portions of their, to her, most interesting contents. The third daughter at home had been taken up to London, to have the benefit of a season's finish by Cramer, and was said to promise unusual brilliancy of touch. Her Crayons too were delightful; and her pencilling, after the Bath school, with it's large single leaves, indescribable sprigs, and ever-to-be-counted foliage, most remarkable for it's proficiency. The dancing, by I know not whom, was also of great promise! Then there were such earnest dissertations upon, and delineations in her letters of the modes of education, adhered to with this young lady. Sir Robert Peel's new Bill was of infinitely less importance; and our Calcutta Stamp Tax a very jest to them. Such scrupulous devotion of periodical hours to each accomplishment; of portions of the day to every art: of the morning to one, the noon to a second, and the afternoon to a score of others!—Alas! thought I, and is all this waste of time, toil,

and youth, and last, not least of the poor Husband's purse, to be cast away in pursuit of what will be utterly valueless and neglected, ere a few short years have wrought their change upon the thankless victim of the present most unprofitable care and unavailing anxiety.

Yet all this toil in youth, and neglect in after years, is the case with nearly three families out of every five of my acquaintance. The married ladies sometimes assert, and it must be allowed with no light portion of truth, that the fault frequently rests with the gentlemen. The same tunes, the same endeavours to please, which once never besought admiration, or at least attention, in vain, are now heard unheeded by their lords, nay, perhaps received with annoyance. The hooka bubbles out, just as loudly at the sweetest passage of the song, or the softest adagio, as at the mere allegro or finale of some worn out concerto. The accompaniment of the flute or voice, once ever offered, is now scarcely granted even to solicitation; while, in fact,

all desire and attempt on the part of the lady to please, are gone, from the conviction of the fruitlessness of the exertion.

Other Ladies contend that time now fails them. Their families have too much claim upon their proper attention, to admit of a relinquishment, as before, to simple accomplishments of the world. In the same way their books, their dress, conversation, manners, and every *agremen* of life, give way to the mere domestic functions of superintending the eating, drinking, nursing, clothing, and sleeping of their little ones. It is true, the affectionate feeling, that prompts such exclusive employment, is amiable, and indicative of one of the kindliest and most admired virtues of our nature. But it's very exclusiveness is it's fault; and if the inspired son of the Psalmist has not erred in telling us there is a time in worldly concerns for all things,—there is surely also capacity in the foldings of the heart, for fuller and more diffusive affections than those, which cold, nay often times unkind

elsewhere, can concentrate only, and direct their force, like the inferior sharers of our creation, to the mere instinctive care and rearing of one's offspring!

I shall close this essay by a short delineation of such a character, by a young poetical acquaintance of mine; and only entreat, that it may not be deemed from the life, and *too* faithful a portrait.

Materna once I knew a hoyden maid,
Lovely and joyous, every thing but—staid;
Blithe as the beaming of her playful eye,
She would waltz, romp, laugh, any thing but—sigh.
I left her then, the gayest of the gay,
Nor met Materna more for many a day;
When next I saw her,—Heavens and earth!—behold
The awful change, a few short years had told!
She sat at home within her husband's hall
Throned as a *Mother!*—here a baby small
Scream'd on her lap, and there in basket laid,
Slept on the floor a little two-years' maid:
Pouting in corner, sulk'd a sturdy boy;
And nigh yon chair a missy shy and coy,
Clung to it's arm, and ever and anon,
Shrunk from Mamma, who fain would draw her on.
I ask'd in wonder,—could this be the girl
I once had met in Fashion's giddy whirl?

Now more than dowdy.—worse than slattern grown,
With rumpled cap, and looser dressing gown ;
Telling long tales of teething, and it's ills,
Of lancing, leeching, purgatives and pills ;
Of troubles dire from nursing, and from dhyes,
Colds, coughs, and rushes,—cholic and weak eyes ;
Thrush, croup, and measles,—boils and vaccination,
And hundred others,—dread enumeration !
There was no punkah, lest it's chilling air
Should hurt the little host that nestled there :
There was no light,—alas ! the cheering ray
Was deem'd but glare, and thus in gloom they lay :
There was no converse, save a Mother's cares,
And save her watchings, frettings, and her fears :—
In short, all life,—idea,—thought,—joy was gone,
She was a *Mother*,—but was that—*alone !*

THE FUGITIVE.

'Mais enfin discourons de l'aimable captive!
MOLIERE'S L'ETOURDI.

AT the entrance, from the south-west, into the beautiful vale of Mukwanpore, in Nepaul, at the point where the clear waters of the Raptee first enter into the valley, after quitting their course among the hills, which rise perpendicularly from the river, and almost darken it with their lofty and wood-crowned heights,—is situated the small and secluded post of Hettourah. It is discovered not long after descending the Cheriaghattah pass; and during the second Nepaul campaign, in 1816, was the point, where the division under the personal command of the late lamented, and, alas!

unappreciated, Sir David Ochterlony, halted after turning the pass; and where they were afterwards joined by the detachment, under Brigadier Burnett, which, as concerted by the General, had gallantly forced the famed pass itself, by a direct assault on it's precipitous and stockaded heights.

Nothing can exceed the beauty of Hettourah. The Goorkahs had avowed their approval of the site, by erecting a neat and well-built description of post, or guard-house, with it's picturesque roofs carved and fashioned after the manner of China. At this spot the river, though deep, is far from broad, but exhibits that glassy clearness peculiar only to mountain streams. It's finny inhabitants are distinctly seen in shoals, gliding over the pebbles and rocks, which gem it's farthest depths, and among them, the bright colours of many resemble those of our northern trout: they were, in fact, originally mistaken for them by our countrymen. Reflected also in every possible hue, on the bosom of the water, are the

many species of trees clothing the hills, as they rise almost perpendicularly from the river;—their range forming with the Cheriaghattah heights, a narrow and most stupendous amphitheatre above the valley.

At the period in which the following little tale is dated, the army under Sir David Ochterlony had retired for some months from Nepaul; and our Resident had long since taken his post at Catmandoo, as stipulated at the peace. There were the usual suite, with a small escort, with this representative of the British Government at the Nepaul Court; and the treasure necessary for their salaries and pay was periodically sent from Patna, under the charge of a party of Sepoys, commanded by a subaltern officer. It was usual for the guard to proceed through the Saul forest on leaving our territory; and then marching by Bechiakoh, and the Cheriaghattah Pass, descend to Hettourah, and there await a party from the British escort at Catmandoo, the capital of Nepaul, which received charge of the treasure,

and enabled the sepoy guard forthwith to return to our provinces.

Lieutenant Raymond, with a detachment of eighty men of one of the Bengal Regiments of Native Infantry, in the month of December, 1816, had been employed on this duty: he had, that very morning, delivered over the treasure to the Resident's escort, at Hettourah, and was preparing to return again towards Behar on the following day. The usual strictness of duty, necessary in guarding treasure, was not lost sight of; and although the money had been safely consigned over, still the habit of discipline enjoined the continuance of the same military precautions, with the detachment; and the regular sentries, before sun-set on that evening, were being posted as usual, around the little encampment.

Young Raymond was naturally of an ardent and romantic turn of mind; although it had been the fashion with him, during the few years of his Indian career, to repress it's feeling, and among his lighter military contemporaries,

to disown it's very existence. He was particularly struck with the beauty and grandeur of the scene around him. Wandering in the vicinity of his tents with the usual accompaniment of our detached officers, a favourite gun, his thoughts dwelt for a time on the majestic view before him. Then reverting to the more distant, yet fondly remembered, and regretted objects of home, which gradually became associated with the feeling of solitude and desertedness that the place awakened,—he sighed at his separation from all that he had once held dear. His present few hopes and future prospects came gloomily before his view, and his mind sank into that train of desponding thought which, it must be confessed, is too often the fate of the younger officers of our native army to suffer; cut off, as they are from every early friend, and thrown often into solitary and cheerless duties, with few anticipations of brighter prospects, to cheer them in their performance. Like the young lover in the well-known tale of the Pirate, he scarcely bethought him of

his gun, until he at length listlessly, and almost unconsciously, fired at some birds which were sailing afar in the still air above him. The report not only aroused him from the dream where his fancy had conveyed him, but awakened the sleeping echoes of the mountain, till the reverberated sounds seemed to mock at the late din of war, which, but a few months before, had thundered in the vicinity of the same scene. He half started, and looked around, at this moment, upon the steep and woody side of the hill near him, he perceived several Goorkah soldiers scrambling down from bush to bush, and tree to tree, apparently not a little quickened in their motions by the report of his fowling piece.

Without apprehension for his party, which could defend itself, he still naturally thought of the treasure which must now be little beyond the fort of Mukwanpore, on it's way to Catmandoo. He was wondering within himself at the probable cause of the Goorkahs lurking in his neighbourhood, when his orderly came

hurrying towards him, and announced that two strangers had precipitately fled into the spot where the guard was encamped, while a party of Nepaulese soldiers, as if in pursuit, were halted in the immediate vicinity, and their leader had demanded to be admitted to the presence of the English Sahib. Raymond quickly sought his encampment. On the way, his Subadar met him, and in a few words apprised his officer, that a female, veiled and closely concealed, but evidently of rank, from the immense value of an Hindoostanee bracelet which she had proffered to the sentinel, who first endeavoured to prevent her seeking refuge at the tents, accompanied by an old and weary Goorkah, had, for some cause or other, thrown herself upon the protection of the Sepoy detachment.

On Raymond's drawing nearer, the Goorkah himself came up as quickly as his faint and trembling limbs would seem to permit, and casting himself imploringly at his feet, entreated, in the name of Heaven, that he would grant

safety and protection to his daughter and himself, and not deliver them up to the Goorkah soldiers, who were in immediate pursuit, and indeed, at that very moment within sight and hearing of the camp.

"Who are ye, then?" enquired Raymond, "and why thus in flight from your own countrymen?"

"My child and I," he eagerly replied, "have escaped from slavery; nay, from death itself; and hearing of your party at Hettourah, have reached it to cast ourselves at your feet."

At this moment they were interrupted by a Sepoy, who informed the officer that the Goorkah sirdar of the party at hand, attended by three or four of his military followers, sent his greeting and compliments to the English captain, and urgently requested to be admitted to his presence.

"There can be no reason for declining the request," said Raymond, turning to the subadar; "but have a few steady men in readiness to attend here should I need them."

The Goorkah was accordingly ushered to the spot where Raymond was standing; his few followers keeping at a little distance in the rear. After the customary salutations, he respectfully, but still authoritatively, or rather as if he thought his solicitation admitted of no possible refusal, requested that the two fugitives from the Nepaul Court, for whose seizure he had the royal order and seal, and whom he had closely followed and traced into this encampment, might be delivered up to his armed party. The party itself, in compliment to the British officer, he had halted at a short distance.

"Yonder old man," he continued in good Hindoostanee, pointing to the aged stranger, who, in the extremity of fear, was shrinking behind Raymond and the Subadar, and trembling for his very life,—"yonder traitor is the male fugitive and thus I arrest him!" exclaimed he, making a movement at the same time, as if to seize his person, while the few followers approached quickly to second him."

"Hold!" said Raymond, calmly, but peremptorily; "this is my ground while I encamp here, and not a foot that has voluntarily sought it's sanctuary shall quit it by force, or without my free permission. Who are these fugitives? and whence is your authority to seize them?"

"Sir," replied the Goorkah, "I have the authority of my superiors; of the rulers of the soil. These people are their subjects; and offenders against the law. They are escaped slaves from the Zenanah of our Chief and Prince, Bureah Ummr Sing Thappa."

"But what is their offence?" enquired the Englishman; "and why came they here?"

"Go,—ask the fickle frailty of woman, why the girl-slave has fled her bower," rejoined the Chief; "and bid the wanton fool tell you why she has seduced yon hoary traitor as the partner of her flight. I know not, care not;—my orders are to seize and conduct them to the fate they merit."

At this instant, bursting from the tent which had afforded her shelter, like a fairy glance of

light, the veiled form of the female object of their discussion darted forward to cast herself at the feet of Raymond. She still held her veil around her, but contrived to cling with one arm to the knee of the astonished Englishman, and throwing her head in the eastern style of lowly prostration to his very feet, faintly shrieked out for his protecting and saving mercy to herself and parent.

"*Parent!*" sternly exclaimed the Goorkah chief, "is it thus, wanton! thou hast titled thy paramour, and the dotard partner of thy flight! Sahib," he continued, addressing Raymond, "yon abject and disgraced being is the slave and late favoured minion of Ummr Thappa! and that traitor, now trembling, behind you, the foul instrument of her guilt, whom she has seduced to aid in her escape. May I claim your permission to remove them?"

There were few incidents that, in one brief moment, could have excited such intense interest in the mind of Raymond, as the sudden, but painful, scene before him. At his

feet was a young trembling female, and at his side her aged companion, both breathlessly suing, as it were, for life at his hand; and awaiting, in death-like anxiety, the coming fiat of his resolve, which might either snatch them from impending fate, or consign them at a word to inevitable and immediate destruction. He gazed in silence at the timid creature at his knee, whose beauteous arm was yet clinging to him convulsively, and at length turning abruptly to the Goorkah Sirdar, "If Ummr Sing," he exclaimed, "were here himself, and with his legions of myrmidons to back him, he should not thus seize the poor suitor for my protection! So apprise him, and the Superior who sent you!"

"May the God of thy Fathers protect and repay thee!" murmured out the faint voice of the suppliant at his feet; and immediately, as if the energy which terror had lent her, had now failed, under the changeful violence and intensity of her new emotions, she sank senseless on the earth, where her delicate form had

already prostrated itself. Ere she came to herself, there had been a long and angry discussion between the Englishman and the Goorkah Sirdar. The latter had tried every means of persuasion, entreaty, and once or twice of open menace, to induce the British officer to relinquish his protection to the fugitive. He stated that his own life would atone for non-compliance with his orders; and that he durst not return to Catmandoo without the desired object of his pursuit; he adverted to the strength of his own party in the neighbourhood, till finding all of no avail, he at length tauntingly exclaimed, "Is it for this abandoned woman,—this shameless wanton and her paramour, that you brave the awful consequences of their detention?"

At these words, which had evidently reached the recovering perception of the young female, she slowly raised herself from the earth; declining, however, the proffered assistance of Raymond; and turning to the Goorkah leader, exclaimed, "Thou breathest falsehood, base

and unmannered slave! Come hither," said she commandingly to the old man; "come hither, thou poor companion of my danger!" Then rising up, and holding him forth to the view of Raymond, whilst, by this graceful and impressive movement, her veil was thrown back, and floated on her shoulders, she mildly yet feelingly exclaimed,—"Is this my paramour? The parent herself of the haughty chief, from whose walls I have fled, lived not on earth more saintly pure, than breathed my every thought towards this aged and faithful partner of my flight!—Nay," she continued as she looked with scorn towards the Goorkah, till her gentle figure seemed to wear the character even of dignity, "was it not enough that I abhorred thy Prince? Dost thou belie, and question the instinctive terror of the fawn which bids it flee the wolf? or must thou revile the prey that shrinks from the murderous stoop of the falcon?"

It is scarcely possible to conceive a more beautiful creature than she who so emphatically

uttered this haughty vindication of her fame and flight. Her dark hair had been braided back after the eastern manner, but in her late exertions and terror, had partly escaped from it's confinement, and it's glistening and silken tresses were falling in rich profusion on her shoulders. Her forehead, however, was scarcely shaded by them, and though it betrayed less fairness than would have belonged even to the warm South of Europe, was yet any thing but dark; and displayed rather that indescribably pure and clear complexion, so peculiar to some of the fair daughters of the remote East. Her eyes, during the moment that they flashed indignation at the insult of the Goorkah Sirdar, were large and brilliantly dark, but the long and deep-fringed lids of her country so often the theme of the Eastern Poets, soon fell shadingly over her glances, as the feelings of habit and retiring shame recalled her to a sense of her unveiled situation amidst the gaze of strangers. She now looked timidly down, and drawing her veil again closely and gracefully

around her, seemed to entreat permission to withdraw from a scene so fraught with apprehension; and seek in the nearest tent a retirement, more suited to her wishes, and the secluded customs of her country.

As Raymond signified his acquiescence with her entreaty, and desired those near him to convey her to his tent, the Goorkah, after briefly recapitulating the danger of the course pursued by the Englishman, abruptly withdrew. There is a bluntness and independent sturdiness in the Goorkah character, which had attracted the notice of our countrymen, in their operations against their late enemy, and Raymond was not a little surprised, therefore, at the ease with which he had got rid of this military claimant for the fugitive. But in truth, the Sirdar was uncertain what course to adopt, and felt himself fettered in the duty entrusted to him. The orders he had hastily received from the Goorkah Authorities to pursue the escaped pair, provided for no contingency, like the unthought-of intervention of the British

detachment; while the strict injunction to the frontier guards, of which his party formed a part, to avoid all collision with, or possible cause of offence to their late invaders, paralyzed his wishes. This he more than hinted to the Lieutenant when intimating his own desire to adopt force, where his entreaties had so entirely failed. The Goorkah soldiers, who in fact were more numerous than the Sepoys, were shortly afterwards led off from the neighbourhood; and the quiet post of Hettourah was again left to the undisturbed possession of the officer and his detachment.

The sun had by this time completely set, and in the shady valley of Muckwanpore, the darkness of night was fast descending. Raymond bethought of precautions to guard against any return of the irritated Goorkahs; and now the circumstances in which he suddenly found himself involved, came forcibly to his reflection. He was at a considerable distance from the outer confine of the Saul forest, where our own frontier commenced, and before him lay the

Cheriaghattah pass, where, in it's present state, even a few men might effectually cut off his retreat. There were other points also of almost equal difficulty of passage, if his opponents were prepared to avail themselves of these advantages. After conferring, therefore, with the Subadar, the Lieutenant made arrangements for speedily breaking up from their present encampment. Marching by night is by no means unusual with our detached parties of Sepoys, and is generally perferred, as more in consonance with the climate; but here, circumstances left Raymond little alternative; and even the appearance of thus retiring from the vengeance of the Goorkahs, was preferable to the certainty of early violence and bloodshed, if their soldiers returned with fuller orders, and better means of enforcing them.

A small portion of a Sepoy tent was now pitched apart for Raymond, after he had given instructions for such means of comfort as could be procured from within his own detachment for it's unexpected guest. He sent for the aged

stranger, who could give but little information, either as to the history, or cause of the flight, of his Mistress. It appeared that he held some subordinate situation in the Zenanah of Ummr Sing, and won by the kindness and presents of the young and lovely favourite of the chief, who had been brought into his residence only a few months before,—it was said, from Hindoostan,—he was induced to assist in her escape to the Company's provinces. Further, that ascertaining the date of the expected arrival of the British treasure, they had planned to reach Hettourah on the same day as the guard. So closely, however, were they pursued, and so early was the discovery of their flight, that they had only gained the sanctuary by a few hundred paces, and were actually in sight of their pursuers at the moment of reaching the encampment.

Before midnight the tents were struck, and having placed the female in a palankeen, which was fortunately with them, they moved on silently and guardedly towards the pass. It

was strange, how deeply they very Sepoys seemed to enter into the interest of these occurrences; they were whispering together as they marched on, and appeared each to be as anxious for the safety of their young and mysterious charge, as if her appeal had been made individually to every private of the detachment. There was not among them one who would not freely have sacrificed his life for this object of their solicitude;—not from the same high spirit of romance that influenced their officer, but partly from the feeling that she was escaping from their late opponents the Goorkahs, which conferred, they thought, some little honour in the rescue; and more, that the event itself, sanctioned too by their officer, was just of the description to work upon the nature and Rajpoot pride of this easily-led class of soldiery. It has been the fashion of late to decry them, and disregard their quiet and unobtrusive services; but, from what source shall we replace so docile, so little expensive, yet so brave a body as the Rajpoots

of our Upper Provinces! Orators, we know, love to call British India, the "Empire of opinion;" but, it is the EMPIRE OF SEPOYS: and woe to it's rulers, when they shall venture to neglect this main spring, this too critical secret of it's mechanism!

Towards daylight they found themselves in the narrow and rugged way, which winds along in continued ascent, till it comes to the difficult and more precipitous approach to the key of the pass itself, situated at the extreme height of the Cheriaghattah ridge. The traces of the prepared road, over which the heavy ordnance of the British Army had been transported in the war, by the incredible exertions of elephants, the aid of cables and blocks affixed to trees, and other means, were now wholly obliterated by the late months of periodical rain: but the line of ascent and the direction were still the same, and made it evident that a few such positions in the hands of determined defenders, would effectually check the proudest and best equipped

army that ever marched to invasion. Immense jetting rocks here and there seemed to obstruct all access; their crests were reached only by climbing with difficulty the broken path which wound around them; and which, when gained, formed steps, or resting places, for the weary toilers up the height. On finally reaching the vicinity of the extreme summit, Raymond distinctly heard the shout and shrill whistle of the Goorkahs, and distinguished, through the haziness of the opening day, several forms above him, whom the approach of his party was putting into confusion. He halted his advanced and leading files, and then moving on with care, and decision, soon reached the summit. He there heard the continued shouts, and perceived the descent and escape of a small body of men, who had been busy stockading near the crest of the ridge; and had they effected their purpose, and but a few hours more been granted to them, a whole brigade might have failed to force a point, which their defence then must completely have

commanded. He paused not, but at once commenced his descent, and after a few hours reached the rocky and broken bed of an exhausted mountain torrent, which now led it's open way for miles, to the commencement of the Saul forest at Bechiakoh.

At this latter place, it was Raymond's intention to have halted and refreshed his men; he betook himself to the side of the palankeen, the doors of which were kept carefully closed, and which was moving on, assisted by many, and well guarded on either side. To the respectful enquiry and expression of his hope, that it's gentle inmate was not much fatigued or distressed by their late perilous ascent of the pass, he received a kind and grateful answer. The hills at this point were more abruptly scarped in their heights, and at one part, cliffs completely overhung the bed of the mountain torrent. It was here, and at the moment that he retired from the side of the palankeen, that a shot whizzed past his leading files, followed by several others, with the

running report of either matchlocks or musquets, on the heights above them. Fortunately they were not repeated, nor was any effort made to return them; they would seem to have been but the insult or warning of a few angry Goorkahs, sent forward to scout, and watch the moving detachment. Whatever they were, the necessity of getting clear of the forest, if possible by that night, was now apparent to Raymond. This he mentioned to his men, who though weary and fatigued, gave a shout of cheerful and hearty acquiescence; and lregardess of what they had suffered, the little band continued on its way, and soon entered the solemn shade of the deep and towering forest of the Teraiee. Slowly and cautiously did the Sepoy detachment proceed through the still depths of the wood, which were now leading to the open plains in their front. The men, who had tasted nothing on the way, but the dry prepared grain which they had with them in their knapsacks, were beginning to exhibit symptoms of extreme

weariness and exhaustion. Many would gladly have braved all that could have assailed them, on halting in their present position, rather than encounter the more distressing fatigue of the remaining portion of their toil. But an occasional shout in their rear, and on their flanks; and once the report of a gun, which was distinctly answered by two successive shots in the remoter distance, gave them to understand that their course was still watched and beset. Raymond clearly perceived that it would involve the most serious public consequences, if his interference in behalf of the distressed fugitive led to any actual fray, or bloodshed, between the troops of the two nations, and for this reason, he determined to reach Pursah, or some other open situation on our own territories, before he halted. The day departed while he was still far from his destination; and never did benighted traveller more gladly hail the twinkling of the cottage light, that beamed to him of safety and coming repose, than did Raymond and his wearied party welcome the

ruins of the late post of Samrah-bass, at the western entrance of the forest, which they at length came upon, in the deep gloom of the night. They were now soon clear of the straggling trees, and in less than an hour had reached the wished-for vicinity of Pursah ;— a post so sadly notorious in the war, for the destruction by the enemy, of an entire detachment of our advanced troops. Here they found a small guard which had been left, with spare tents and other heavy baggage of their party, deposited at this place, before entering the rugged and difficulty route just quitted.

A tent was soon pitched, and Raymond conducted his interesting and grateful guest to it's shelter: he lingerd for a moment at it's entrance, still to tender his polite and respectful offer of farther service; but the retiringness, and anxious shrinking from observation of his lovely and timid charge, soon convinced his truly respectful and manly feeling, that the same little attentions it would have been incumbent on him to offer to a fair country-

woman of his own, were here unwished for, and even painful to the seclusion of Eastern habits. He retired, and all was soon stillness and repose in their new encampment: not a sound stirred in the lonely hours of night, or broke upon the silence of the plain; save only the wakeful challenge, and "all's well" of the sentinel; or the sudden and causeless bark of some native dog, the faithful but neglected follower of the Sepoys.

In a few days they reached Bettiah, where it was resolved to halt some time, for the purpose of refreshing the cattle. On the way, little had occurred worthy of notice. Every attention and respect had been paid to the beauteous stranger, and Raymond could not but remark the continued intense feeling of devotion to her, that had been excited throughout his whole detachment. Her wealth and generosity, indeed, appeared boundless, and already, through the aid of the old Goorkah and some others with the party, she had attached to her from the neighbourhood,

a small but respectable train of attendants. The costly jewels on her person secured these means, and it may be almost unnecessary to explain that the native ladies of India do not hesitate to disburse one by one the pearls of their necklaces, or other portions of their jewels, whenever their circumstances require it. Their wealth frequently consists only in their ornaments, which are accumulated for the purpose of being so disposed of: and thus the habit carries with it none of the shame or reluctance with which a fair sister of Europe would shrink to part with her smallest trinket.

The expression of sincere gratitude to her deliverer seemed, however, to be now the leading and ceaseless wish with the young stranger; numerous were the little Eastern and characteristic modes of it's display. Every morning on his breakfast table, Raymond discovered some flowers tastefully arranged by herself; which her attendants must have been at some pains in searching for, from the vicinity

of their daily route: and the day before their arrival at Bettiah, it appearing that they had failed to procure the accustomed offering, there was presented to him, in their stead, a small prepared rose, such as the inmates of Eastern Harems love to shape and arrange from their delicate and coloured muslin. The whole was scented, and the stem entwined by a string of beautiful pearls. Gratified as Raymond was by this kindly token of her feeling towards him, our young soldier was hurt and distressed on receiving the pearls. They were, perhaps, in compliment only, but still they seemed to him as a gift, almost a remuneration for his services; and his native delicacy recoiled from their acceptance. It must be confessed that the romance of Raymond's heart had been, for some days, most busy in the re-assertion of it's awakened empire. The glimpse he had for a few moments caught of the fugitive at Hettourah; the loveliness of her features; and the circumstances themselves under which she had been thrown upon his notice and protection;

were now ever present in his waking and sleeping dreams. The weaker sex of India had appeared to him but as a degraded and mindless portion of humanity; and those he had hitherto seen, had led him too readily to confirm the truth of his appreciation. But here he had found a young creature, loveliness itself, with a soul of enterprise and energy beyond the common stamp, and yet more gentle and timid even than our fondest poets had delighted to pourtray in their glowing pages of Eastern imagery. Her mysterious and delicately retired manner, too, had fastened with so touching an interest on his imagination;—

> "Like aught that for it's grace might be
> Dear, and yet dearer for it's mystery!"—

that it would have required far less of romantic soil than his heart presented, to have received there a deep and too glowing impression.

His every thought was now engrossed by the fair stranger; and he soon arrived at that stage of aroused feelings, when the admiration is too

powerfully excited for the colder judgment to investigate it's object, or enquire it's meaning. The pearls he returned, with as much of compliment, and kind explanation of the cause, as his knowledge of the language enabled him to convey through her emissary: and they were not again forwarded to him; but during the day, he received a respectful entreaty to attend at her tent on the following morning.

It would be difficult to describe the restless eagerness with which Raymond looked forward to this interview. At the appointed hour he was in attendance at the tent, and was immediately ushered on to the interior, where he observed that one-half had been veiled, or curtained off; and with a feeling of disappointment, at once comprehended, that he should not be permitted to approach nearer, or see the late object of his incessant thoughts. There was a short pause, which was broken by the delicate and gentle voice he had heard so interestingly in terror and vindication at Hettourah. It conveyed a simple compliment, but it's every

tone was intently listened to; and when, as it seemed, the emotions of grateful recollection were overpowering to the fair speaker, and her voice faltered as she dwelt on his generous and noble protection—he interrupted her with an entreaty not to thank him, for having simply performed a pleasing duty; in which every member of his country or profession would have yielded life itself, rather than have shrank from the same little service he had been so happy as to afford her.

"I had heard this," she replied, "and had prepared myself to meet this generous conduct; and yet when I now experience it, my lips have little learned to speak their gratitude as they ought. Brave Englishman! I must no longer burthen your kindness; I leave this place to-morrow."

"Leave this!" exclaimed Raymond, as the intelligence jarred on every chord of his heart; and the surprise of his exclamation betrayed that so sudden a closing of his dream, was as little contemplated as approved; "nay, not so

soon; surely, the fatigue, the necessary preparation,——"

"All is prepared," she continued; "my people have arranged for my departure; a suitable escort has been engaged, and it only remains for me to——." She paused for some time, nor was the silence broken in upon by Raymond, whose bosom was at that moment the scene of too many conflicting thoughts to admit of speech. At length she resumed, "I could have wished to disclose to you some circumstances of my fate, which might remove the impressions my late fearful flight may have given birth to; *but, I dare not!* It were shame to many, certain ruin and foul disgrace to a few in high honour and alliance with your nation, who are still dear —oh! how dear to me! even while I shudder at the cruel and fruitless sacrifice to traiterous policy, which betrothed, and consigned me to the abhorred Prince of your enemy! The insolent man who pursued me to your camp called me the *slave* of Ummr Sing: well

he knew me to be no slave! But I must leave this afflicting subject; alas! the daughter of Princes was not the meet price for treason, nor to be bartered as the base pledge of unhallowed pacts! But, farewell, young and brave Englishman! thou hast been my saviour! farewell! and it may be for ever!" She held forth her hand from one of the folds of the muslin screen, and he respectfully approached to press it to his lips; but he felt it's trembling, and too-speaking agitation; and what will not the perception in such case vividly comprehend? Drawing it gently on, the little elegant form of its possessor was bent forward, and through the faint muslin curtain, he caught the sobs of this lovely and mysterious creature, as her head sank for an instant upon his arm. 'Twas but for an instant, a brief, too fleeting instant; the hand was suddenly withdrawn, and a retiring step sped to the farthest recess of the tent. All was then mute silence, save the whisper of females, and the low murmur of suppressed weeping; and Raymond rushed from the scene

with emotions, which, but a few days before, he would have scoffed at the ideal possibility of his ever suffering.

The next day a Palankeen, escorted by peons and several armed men, and well attended, moved off to the westward. It's course was intended to be kept secret, but the destination had transpired, and rumour confidently asserted it to be the distant city of Lucknow. For the whole day Raymond quitted not his tent; and, in the evening, hastily calling for his horse, as if madness and sudden resolve had prompted the order, he sprang into the saddle, and at full speed fled from the camp in the same direction as that pursued by the little party of the morning. He returned again only on the third day, pale, wan, and haggard, seeming the very victim of crushed hope, and of the successless result of some rash daring; the passionate and unavailing effort of despairing emotion. But whatever had occurred, the heart of Raymond, with all it's wildness and romance, was too noble to have caused a single

blush for his memory, however deep the blow his own peace might have sustained, or whatever in after life his painful recollections of the past.

The Detachment now returned to it's station, and the young officer frankly revealed the eventful circumstances of the rescue to his immediate superior; but, as expected, no appeal, no representation, nor complaint, ever reached our authorities from Nepaul!

Years, many years had past, and the age of Raymond had grown to maturer manhood. He had in that time married a fair relation of his own, and held a responsible and honourable Staff appointment at one of the larger stations, not very distant from Oude; when he was one morning surprised, by his infant child returning home from it's accustomed airing, with a most splendid and costly necklace of diamonds placed upon it's neck by two strangers, who were afterwards traced to have been servants from the Court of Lucknow: and Raymond's heart, like that of Ivanhoe

towards the beautiful Jewess, doubtless beat for a time more tumultuously than would have been gladly sanctioned by his beloved wife, when he discovered with the necklace, a string of pearls, *the string he had once returned!* and read on a small ornament also attached, this couplet in Arabic:—

"Thou art remember'd!
Frown not! my prayers but tell it!"

MYSELF.

Nothing is more foolish, than for a man to talk of himself.
MISS PORTER.

IT has frequently been particularly amusing to me to listen to the sage surmises as to who is the real Simon Pure, the veritable BENGALEE of these lucubrations.* I have heard a hundred different guesses, and if any of them may claim peculiar merit, it is simply that they are more ludicrously, more amusingly wide of the mark, than their neighbours. One man, who appear to be deep in the mystery, confidently affirms that he has it "from the best authority; from a channel that would

* These papers appeared originally in the Calcutta weekly 'Oriental Observer.'

leave no single particle of doubt; in fact under circumstances every way conclusive to *his* mind," (the usual preface and poor petitioning for belief, when the sources of information *are* somewhat questionable,) "that the BENGALEE is no otherthan an elderly and very respectable servant of the Honourable Company, whose intelligent physiognomy is daily seen peering on the Calcutta course, from the corner of an antiquated and very ricketty coffee-coloured chariot." Another declares that the BENGALEE is the ex-Editor of one of our newspapers. Whether from among the late potentates of the Bull, the ex-Generals, learned retainers, or varied enditers of the Hurkaru, or from among the late proprietors, or first, second, or fifth assistant Editors of departed Journals, expired Scotsmen, or defunct Chronicles, our deponent saith not. It was asserted at dinner the other day, to be a well-known scribbling military gentleman at Barrackpore; but this was clearly refuted by a Cadet in company, for no officer could be guilty of such *un-Sepoy-like*

details, such milk-and-watery maidenism, as appeared in the tale of "The Fugitive." Yet a friend of mine who says very little; a reverend old crony, who still smokes his Hookah in the real Nawaubee and attic style, disdaining the innovation of *tarbunds*, and other follies of the College and Royal Barracks, disclosed to me, a few evenings since, that he is in the secret of the BENGALEE, who is a very gentlemanly good fellow, once in the service, and of the same year and standing as himself, but now in the firm of Messrs. McCulloch and Co. "You may see him," he continued, "day after day, in his little Palkée-garee, posting off at sun-set to the gardens: not a glance gives he to the right, or to the left, though all the beauty of the road were concentrated in one noisy and giggling Barouche, thundering past his little ponies, with the ladies themselves aiming at him the whole artillery of their attractions!"

After all, there is much pleasure in masking it before the public; in playing off the

incognito, as it were, on one's nearest acquaintances, and appearing in the luxury of print, without the pains and penalties of it's exposure. It must be admitted, however, there are *some* few annoyances: you see your friend with your own production before him and watching him, all unconcernedly in appearance, but anxiously at heart, you hear each pithy observation on the various matter, but no one syllable of praise. Or, death and confusion! you hear him enquire "who the d—l's this BENGALEE, who has been prosing here of late?" One dare not curse him, in turn, for a tasteless, impertinent puppy; one dare not even look displeasure: then the horror of enacting smiles and indiffernce, with the facetious disavowal of all knowledge of the confounded old Proser! I would not writhe in such agony again (it *did* occur but once) for all the German honours of a Goëthe; and I certainly had forsworn my labours, but for the angel smile of a newly-arrived spinster, who was copying some of my early

Poetry into her Album, and sweetly enquired if I had seen the BENGALEE. Her smile was it's rescue, and salvation.

In my first Chapter, after introducing myself to my readers, and detailing the result of my early surrenderment to the tender passion, which commenced amidst all blissfulness of secret looks, and intermingling glances at St. John's Church; and ended, at the young lady's behest, in an awful repulse, under the bluff hand and seal of her Papa, I proposed to explain the circumstances that roused me from the state of gloom and seclusion which followed so melancholy a catastrophe. For years I saw no one, excepting those it was impossible to escape; while my Sirdar-bearer, and the few natives whom business brought about me, at length grew into so essential and main a portion of my necessary acquaintance, that I became a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard, and almost a convert to their goodly habits and observances of Hindooism. There was a young medical gentleman in my

vicinity, who essayed his utmost, in consequence, to get me conveyed to Calcutta from a distant station, for the especial kindly purpose of being introduced to a friend of his, a Dr. Some-one; "in charge of the insane hospital," as I found by reference to the blue book: this, too, simply because the puppy saw me studying the Shastras, shaved like a Hindoo, and coolly enrobed with a dotee only. Beef, and the very knowledge of it's murderous existence in my neighbourhood, became at this time intolerable to me; and but for a severe and sickening ague, contracted at Benares while bathing, with a select Hindoo coterie, on the fitting occasion of the eclipse of a December's moon, I verily believe that by this time I should have been an Hindoo myself; or, at least, as learned a Pundit as the erudite translator from the Sanscrit of that most amusing of all amusing Comedies, the Mrichchakati, or Toy Cart.

But now we come to the real and effective awakener from my dreams and despondency,

and as it reached me under circumstances not a little serious in themselves, it will be well to drop, for a moment, all idle flippancy in their description. Several years ago, during the unsettled month of July, I was upon the Ganges, at no great distance from a point above the little station of Monghyr;—the river at the point swelling after the late rains into a seeming sea in it's extent. The wind, from the south-east, was violently high, and opposing itself to the rapid current of the freshes, as they came boiling down from the westward, raised an abrupt, and conflicting wave, more fearfully broken and high, than could have been imagined in a far inland river, however extensive and agitated. My Budgerow was large and tolerably safe; but it was found impossible to live in the centre of the stream; and after one or two dangerous and ineffectual attempts to keep nearer the bank, it was deemed prudent to bring to. A small creek was fortunately gained, and the crew immediately commenced the preparation

of their wonted food, and awaited the subsiding of the wind. But the gale increased in it's fury, and scarcely was I seated at my little table, with my writing materials around me, congratulating myself on my safe position, the calm and smooth shelter of which formed a strange contrast with the rushing violence of the torrent without, as it foamed and lashed past us in mad opposition to the tempest; when my attention was arrested by several shouts, and hurried voices from the top of the Budgerow. "The boat will be lost!—they will be lost!" distinctly struck upon my ear, and rushing to the deck, I saw a large Mirzapore cotton-boat carried past the head of the creek with the rapidity of lightning. It's deck and roof were covered with the crew, and a few native passengers, who shrieked to us piteously for help as they flew past our Budgerow. But it was unavailing, and their boat went rolling and staggering on among the waves, to a distance from the shore, in a way it is impossible to

describe. In a few moments she gave a fearful reel, and at once the whole plungingly disappeared from our view, excepting the utmost point of the mast, which was still seen hurrying on with the torrent, with a few helpless creatures clinging to it's ropes in all the agony and struggling terror of death. The buoyancy of the cargo, or, probably, the choppah of the boat, seemed to prevent it's sinking altogether for a brief and awful moment; but ere my recollection could prompt a single thought, beyond the mere unavailing wish to aid, the mast too went down! and I could plainly, but at times only, perceive one poor wretch tossing on the bosom of the merciless waters;—till he, also, after a strong and despairing struggle, sunk within the waves, and disappeared for ever!

How the mind shrinks back into itself, and quails in horror at witnessing so nigh, the sudden, unprepared consignment to eternity of a whole band of our fellow-creatures! The

last shriek borne upon the gale,—the struggling forms,—the very aspect of Nature itself, bleak, frowning, and pitiless,—all fasten on the imagination, and leave the feelings too agonising at the moment,—too painful thereafter, for endurance, even under a far distant retrospect. But there was little time given me for reflection. A pinnace at this juncture was perceived to be coming down close to the bank, and evidently trying to shelter itself in the same creek with ourselves. If it missed the opening, and failed to obey the helm at the required angle, it must inevitably fly off to the body of the stream, where, although better able to contend with it's violence than the country boat whose destruction we had just witnessed, the danger was extreme. I could distinctly see a family of Europeans, as they were fast approaching us, in anxious alarm; and instantly causing a long and stout rope to be secured to a tree, at the extreme and outermost angle of the bank, and fastening a small log of wood,

the only thing at hand, to the other extremity of the rope, we awaited the rapid approach of the pinnace. It came rushing on with the speed of thought, and missed the creek; at that moment one of the strongest of my people flung out the coil, which happily reached the boat, and swinging round and entangling with the standing rigging, checked it's course, but with a staggering and alarming reel, which brought it's gunwale under the wave. A second rope was now cast to it, and by the aid of both, and our anxious assistance, they were enabled, after considerable exertion, to haul back into the creek.

How shall I describe my astonishment, when, for the first time since the crushing of my hopes and affections, my vision fell upon the same blue eyes which for years had been the subject of my dreams, and which fancy, under my gloom and seclusion, had latterly dressed forth in as revolting a guise as in sober reality they were still pleasing and attractive! Those eyes were now

beaming upon me their tearful thankfulness for the safety of herself and family; and she hastened to introduce me to her husband, a gentlemanly man, of good exterior, whom I instantly recognised as a once old friend and youthful contemporary. They were on the way to the Presidency, to send their elder children to England; and, in their kindness now, not only made prisoner of me for the day, but wished that I should bear them company in their further progress to Calcutta.

To cut a long narrative short, suffice it to say, for days before we entered the Hooghly, I had witnessed such amiable demeanour in their family circle; such unaffected domestic happiness, resulting from the delightful interchange of unreserved confidence and ceaseless affection, that I had forsworn seclusion and selfish retirment, for a share only of the mere friendly regard of the same blue eyes, with their beaming of mildness and esteem, which I had formerly fled from under boyish conviction of imagined falsehood and foolish deceit.

Having now redeemed my pledge, and related, as I promised, a portion of these leading circumstances of my life, a truce with egotism! The BENGALEE, for the future, shall restrict himself to his little tales and sketches of Anglo-Indian society, and introduce himself, and his own concerns to notice only when absolutely necessary; or, when called for in relation to the passing events, which he may endeavour to exhibit for the amusement and benefit of his readers.

MARY ASHFORTH.

This will be a mournful tale;
And they who will listen may believe.

LORD BYRON.

In the commonest paths, and the most frequented scenery,—in the domestic circle, and amidst the seeming wonted tenor of every-day, there may exist more real sorrow, more unaffected and heart-breaking anguish, than oftentimes the pen of fancy can portray, or even the imagination single forth from among the airy dreamings of romance.

At a quiet station on the Ganges, about midway to the Upper Provinces, in the retired spot set apart for the burial ground of the cantonments of Monghyr, the stranger,

as he quits his boat for the evening, and wanders in the vicinity of this secluded dwelling of the dead, finds his attention directed to a large and splendid tomb, rising conspicuously above the rest. It attracts notice from among the reliques of our departed countrymen, chiefly from it's size and unusual costliness; particularly, as the other graves are mostly rude unadorned mounds; and as their inscriptions and humble attempts at monumental adornment apprise us, enclose the mortal remains of worn-out invalids, and pensioned soldiers of the military establishment.

The erection itself, with it's rich black marble slab in the centre of a small niche or recess, has, however, little to distinguish it from the architecture and style of the tombs, at our Eastern metropolis. On the tablet, large characters of gold tell us the age and rank in life of the deceased, while some conspicuous letters, at the corner of the inscription, proclaim, as usual, to the world,

that some Cossitollah artist is the sculptor. But with the name of the deceased here, how deep a tale of suffering is recalled to the memory; and how recollection sickens to dwell upon the many lorn hours of misery, which consigned it's once-lovely possessor to this distant and untimely sepulchre.

And yet there is nothing peculiarly eventful in the fate of poor Mary Ashforth; for such was the maiden name of her, whom the marble describes as "Mary, the Lady of Augustus Treville, Esq. of the Bengal Civil Service, who departed this life at the early age of Twenty-three." Of the incidents of her life, too, some may have been the portion of many; but the stings of fortune will touch lightly on the hearts of those where sensibility is blunted, and feeling hath little existed: whilst in a bosom like her's, they inflict a pang which rankles till the still tomb only shall hush it's throb, or the hand of death assuage the peaceless and unwearying agony.

Miss Ashforth, in her own native and domestic circle, in a midland county in England, where her Father held a rich and extensive living, was the pride and happiness of many. Her parent enjoyed, in addition to his living, the honourable office of Lecturer at one of the Inns of Court in the metropolis, and with his beloved daughter, and in the possession of wealth and reputation, it seemed that Fate had again smiled upon his widowed home. His attendance, however, to his periodical duties in town, proved too much for his years and constitution; and on one occasion some unavoidable exposure through it, brought on a severe indisposition, which, though it partially yielded to the skill of his Physician, and the affectionate and devoted care of his Mary; yet a dreaded relapse speedily came on, and a few months saw the lovely and afflicted girl a fatherless orphan, under the roof of one of her parent's executors.

It was at first thought that the estate of

the deceased would have left the daughter a handsome competency; but the successor to the living proved to be a young man of family, at that time on the continent; and his agent, a person of little principle contrived to exhibit a case of dilapidation, which consumed nearly all the personal property accumulated at the death of the late incumbent; while some informality in the title to an estate which had been purchased a few years before, threw the case into Chancery, and left the poor orphan 'a possible — nay, almost a present beggar. She was at this time little more than entering her eighteenth year, lovely, unaffected, and peculiarly accomplished. A home was offered to her on every side, but she remembered a pressing invitation during her Father's life, from her Uncle, of the Civil Service in India, her now nearest relative. It had been given but a year before this, when he pressed her to accompany his three fair daughters to Bengal, on their return to his Eastern roof; and the

invitation had then been proffered in the same urgent and not-to-be-refused manner, in which men would often force favours and good will on those, who, from happier circumstances, are beyond the need of them; or, from their situation at the time, utterly precluded from their acceptance. This, however, was altogether unsuspected by Mary, and as soon as her determination to join her Uncle was made known, her friends, seeing the fruitlessness of their entreaties to retain her, and judging that the excitement and necessary exertion in the preparations would rouse her in some measure from her state of affliction, assented to, and assisted the measure. In a few weeks therefore she was a passenger on board the Honorable Company's ship *Elphinstone*, under the care of a respectable family returning to India, who had been made known to her through some mutual friend.

At this juncture of unspeakable distress suffering under her recent bereavement, and her separation from her earliest friends and

native country, there was still one source of affliction, which, although her tongue might never frame it's disclosure, nor her heart's throbbing scarcely dare whisper to herself, yet came, alas! *would* come to itstil a double portion of bitterness in the sad cup of which she was doomed to partake. When her sorrowing fancy again gave her parent before her in the late home of his benevolence and affection, another form would mingle in the dream, and link it's young charm with every remembered scene of her youth! In the lonely moments too, in her cabin, when her little library would engage her attention, the passages she most sought, and almost unconsciously wept over, were those of her few Italian authors; the well known works, marked and approved by one, who had taught her, in their delightful and mutual studies, the language that he loved. 'Twas then she found that the image of her self-appointed and too amiable preceptor, a young relative and frequent guest of her

father, was too indelibly marked in her memory, and alas! for her own peace, too fondly, too ceaselessly cherished as it's inmate. She knew that he, only lately entered at the Temple, could not prevent her departure; that he was poor and dependent himself, while too generous to bind her to any engagement, at the moment of a separation perhaps for ever, he thus suffered her to leave England without a disclosure of his passion; and rather risqued her ill opinion, than injure, as he thought, the future fate of the adored, yet unapprised object of his affection. She knew and felt all this; but the very silence she approved of in him, now clung to her heart as an enhancement of it's misery. But why dwell on this portion of her fate, and wherefore should it awaken interest? A young orphan it is true, is on her way to India;—torn too from her young heart's approved, ere time hath been allowed to seal the passion with avowal, but yet hath fanned it so freshly into

being, that to quell it now were a task beyond poor Mary's effort! Nay, these are incidents of every day occurrence. And yet with her they *did* sink deeply, fearfully in her peace; and if she complained not, wept not often, it was only like the vanquished and wounded Burman, deserted by his brethren, yet moaning not, struggling not at his fate;—for who would hearken to, or alleviate the agony?

She arrived in Calcutta, and was kindly, cordially enough received at the Gardens, at the house of a friend of her Uncle. She was too little known to be an object of general admiration on her arrival; but in the immediate circle, where she moved for a few weeks, until an opportunity offered for her proceeding to the Upper Provinces, she was considered an interesting and highly-accomplished young woman. Lovely they could scarcely call her, she was too pale, and her appearance too dejected for this;—but there was a pensive, retiring gentleness in her manner which could not but elicit the

admiration of all who knew her, and soon established a feeling of interest and regard. In less than four months after her reaching India, an opportunity occurred for her leaving Calcutta, with a Lady, and in due time she arrived at Bankipore, the station of her Uncle, Mr. Adolphus Ashforth, second Judge of the Provincial Court of Appeal and Circuit, for the division of Patna.

Some daughters of Mr. Ashforth have been already mentioned. They were now with their Father, and still unmarried;—all of them plain, essentially uneducated, but dressy and most forward girls. Their accomplishments were vaunted, and made much of, by a few of their own coterie; but in sober reality, they were scanty enough. Miss Ashforth, the eldest, was possibly acquainted with three whole Sonatas on the Piano, and a few exercises with variations, which she played with tolerable execution; skipping only here and there a few half dozen of the more difficlt passages, or complex variations. These she

ever pronounced stupid, as she passed them by with an air of complacency and rejection. Celestina, the second young lady, undertook the Harp, and with her it was an undertaking! She would employ herself at a party at their own house, and annoy her companions, for a full hour, with the new strings and tuning, and at last when she had adjusted herself for effective playing, the sum total of the exhibition was contained in some old Welsh air; and the half, perhaps, of a dull, but well-known movement from a new Opera. The third, Olivia Emma, was esteemed to be no musician; but then she was *so* clever;—she patronised Albums, and poetical Scrap-books. She had procured the happiness of an introduction to Bernard Wycliffe, and Cytheron, two of the daystars of the bright columns and corners of the Journal, and other papers of that period; and nothing pleased Olivia more, than her Papa kindly making these distinguished individuals the lions of his frequent entertainments. Then she painted

so prettily;—her flowers were inimitable, and her chalk,—life itself! as her kind Papa declared, when he daily produced her last school-heads, and well-draperied academy Venuses and Graces. It was evident that her drawing master must also have thought highly of his pupil, and most attentively assisted her; for he had plainly touched and retouched these specimens, till more than three-fourths of the pictures were his own.

Their cousin Mary, unaffected in her worth and simplicity, little thought to evince her superiority, and yet it was too apparent to be well received in such a family: for, very soon after her arrival among them, she found herself excluded from their avocations and plans of amusement, and treated only as an intruder in their circle. If the gentlemen, as was too frequently the case when following their own inclinations, evinced more attention to Mary than the others, she never failed to hear of it after their departure; mean jealousy, or envy, such

as theirs, has too little control over it's emotions and petty bitterness, to conceal it's pangs, or repress it's constantly humiliating display.

"My dear Emily," said Mr. Ashforth to his eldest daughter, on an important occasion, some few months subsequent to his niece's arrival, "this melancholy cousin of yours, who is neither ornamental nor useful here, seems a sad thorn to the felicity of yourself and sisters. But what think you, (and don't be offended, my dear!) at her again securing from you, one of your beaux? That utter fool and drunkard, Treville, has sent me a proposal for her!"

"Treville made Mary an offer, Papa!—I won't believe it!" exclaimed the astonished, and more than half-annoyed Miss Ashforth.

"By Jove! it is a fact though! and you must have long since known that he was little worth having, for either of yourselves. He's not sober for three hours together, and has not an idea beyond his stud and his

champagne. What put it into his head to ask Mary, I know not."

"Nay," rejoined the daughter, "nor do I care but it was only yesterday, that Mr. Jackson and the young Lancer he brought with him, so unceremoniously stole away from me at the Piano, to Mary's chair: and what Treville or any other fool can find in her, I cannot conceive."

"Why, my dear child," exclaimed the provident Papa, "you surely would not think of Treville yourself. God forbid he should marry a daughter of mine;—the drunkard!"

"But will he marry Mary,—Pa?"

"Yes, dear! he has asked her;—and she quietly refused."

"Refused, Papa!—never!" interrupted the young lady.

"Nay, but she did, Emily," asserted the Papa, "and that quietly too, but positively. On his coming to me in high dudgeon, I, not so quietly, but a little more positively, at once decided that she should marry him;

she has been too long here, and—" "in your way, Love," might have followed, for the sentiment was as plainly avowed, as emphasis and manner could announce it.

It took six long tedious months, nevertheless, ere this exemplary Uncle could contrive to accomplish the full sacrifice of his niece; but at the close of that period she was married to Mr. Treville, while the fears and jealousy of this amiable family were happily appeased by her removal. What she suffered, what means they adopted to force the poor victim to her fate, remain unknown; but the blanched and wasted cheek of poor Mary, —her bewilderment and stifled sighs on approaching the ceremony of her nuptials— the convulsive sob that would not let her breathe aloud her own assent to the act,—the shuddering horror with which she appeared to waken to reality, when the Clergyman feelingly pronounced the final blessing; and lastly the loud hysteric shrieks which reached the ears of the silent and dismayed guests,

as her cousins hurried the victim immediately to her own room, and vainly endeavoured to quell and suppress the piercing betrayment of her agony;—all these bare witness, nay, spake execrating volumes against the complicated cruelty of those who had consigned her to such a fate!

Now there remained nothing but to do her duty as a wife; and it is much to say that she did it, if not calmly or resignedly, at least conscientiously. But her very efforts at calmness, and Christian gentleness of spirit, soon seemed to raise disgust in the late drunken lover, and now brutal husband. His violence, his revilings, his unmanly and cruel insult to her in her very house,—these formed the topics of many a conversation of her neighbours, yet all spoke of her with admiration and pity, while many prayed to Heaven for her release. Mary, however, was soon permitted to find some little solace in her misery; not from their consoling kindness, for her sorrows were deposited only in her

own heart, but in the birth of a little angel of a child, which, although it brought her no change or mercy from it's Father,—yet seemed itself to smile upon her grief, and lure her still to earth for it's sweet sake of helplessness and innocence.

It was about three years afterwards that I saw poor Mary, for the last time, on her way to Calcutta, with this sole solace of her existence, which she was then conveying to the Presidency, previous to its being embarked for Europe. It had been always delicate, and it had at last been determined that the infant should peremptorily quit India for a colder climate. Mrs. Treville could not bear to think of the separation;—it seemed a thing that must come, yet so fearful, so thrillingly painful was the idea, that she shrunk from contemplating it, as a thing too agonising for belief. The child, too, was far from well; and to accompany it was impossible, for her husband's extravagance and ruined circumstances prevented this. Alas!

there may be splendour in an Indian match;—there may be present elegance and apparent competency, with an anticipated retirement, too at last, to our native home: but, merciful Heaven!—at what a sacrifice, even with the happiest, are not these advantages too frequently purchased! The child, when most it needs the Mother's care, is torn from her protecting arms to be consigned to strangers! And at the age, of all others the most delightful, the most endearing to a parent's love, are the objects of affection forced away, that the ties of blood and fondness may be lost to the recollection of the child, and the parent herself, and her infant, too often be estranged, or separated for ever!

The ship sailed. Mary weepingly remained in Calcutta for tidings of her little girl from the Sand Heads, and by the Pilot. The vessel was to touch at Madras, and from this place she had no letters. It was a sad disappointment to her, and she was now on her way back to Patna, when a newspaper,

procured on the river from the Dâk office at Berhampore, attracted her attention. A friend was with her, and saw her suddenly hanging over it in mute convulsion. She was not in tears, but there was something awfully agonising in her look. The paper was snatched up, and in too legible characters appeared, "Died at sea, near Madras, Mary Treville, infant daughter of A. Treville, Esq., Bengal Civil Service, aged three years and some months."

Yet no tears came; they would not come. For days she lay as if stunned by some overpowering blow, and recognised no one. A medical gentleman had been summoned over from Berhampore, and with her kind friend, who was still on board the Budgerow, endeavoured to hasten on the boat, in the hope of reaching Mrs. Treville's station. They now heard her at times whispering to herself, and murmuring Italian; and if any thing could have added, in the imagination of those who knew her, to the touching,—

nay, too painful interest of the scene, it was the thought of this poor sacrificed and accomplished young creature, thus withered in her prime; her mind too shocked and broken, to present to her the death of her child, the immediate cause of it's ruin, but now murmuring unwittingly and plaintively her last accents in a language, which was evidently associated with some indistinct memory of former happiness. For days they continued to watch the couch of the poor fevered and mindless sufferer; until at length, without a tear, without closing her glazed and swoln eye, she sunk and sunk, till the kind hand of death came coldly and calmly upon her, and brought her to "that peace which the world cannot give."

THE LATE MARQUESS OF HASTINGS.

Asiam istam refertam, et eandem delicatam sic obiit, ut in eâ neque avaritiæ, neque luxuriæ vestigium reliquerit: maximo in bello sic est versatus.—

CICERO.

THERE is nothing depends so much on the mere caprice of the moment, or upon the accidental fitness of the opportunity for its existence, as the excitement and extension of popular feeling. The same events which at one period would pass unnoticed, or at most be acknowledged as holding only a secondary grade in the occurrences of life, are, at others, magnified into circumstances of the gravest importance, and assert louder claims on the attention and sympathy of the world, than would be warranted by the possession of ten times their intrinsic interest. At

home, during the recess of Parliament, and in the period of peace and repose, a case of abduction, or a murder of little more than common atrocity, will fill the newspapers of the united kingdom for weeks; while the hero of the attempt, or the convicted assassin, is paraded before the public with as much pomp of notoriety, as would fall to the lot of the victorious leaders of armies, or the statesman who has wielded the destinies of millions!

It is melancholy to carry this farther, and to reflect that the same capricious disregard of propriety, which at times gives unwonted importance to unworthy events, may also, under some adventitious circumstance of pre-occupied attention, permit the proudest and mightiest claims upon our sympathy to pass away unheeded and unhonoured. I was led into this train of thought, by a late calamity and real public loss, which reached us with less of awakened remark, less of avowed regret in it's announcement, and I

must add, less of proper feelings, than could have accompanied the mere obituary record of an almost noteless stanger. Would it have been imagined some few brief years ago,—would it have been believed when we hailed the return to the Presidency of Bengal, of the conqueror of Central India,—the master hand and controller of it's empires!—that, ere a few seasons should have intervened,—ere the ploughshare, even in it's peaceful and protected labour, had yet had time to pass over the measureless extent of his victories,—remarks, like these, should be called for, on witnessing the heartlessness and apathy with which the death of our late revered Ruler has been received in the scenes of his triumphs!

It might be unbecoming to offer any observation on the absence of all *public* notice in India of the demise of the late Marquess of Hastings. I do not remember to have witnessed any such tribute of respect to other departed rulers, who may have survived

their term of Indian government, and retired to breathe their last at a distance from it's jurisdiction. Yet, without detracting from the merit of any predecessor of Lord Hastings, surely the latter has more recent, and more immediate claims upon India, nay, upon the friendship and gratitude of many of our living and powerful superiors, who are yet within the scene of his glorious career; and who owe to his kindness the very eminence that should take lead in our community, in the expression and public tesimony of it's affection.

It is little consolation to say, that history will do ample justice to his merit; yet this alone must now soothe those who feel disappointed in human nature itself, when they see one of it's proudest adornments sink to the grave so little honoured, even by the nations he has blessed. The Historian in after ages, when his labours shall bring him to the contemplation of the Marquess of Hastings' character, amidst the

mingled detail of his eventful period, will find his task brighten. And if his mind be tinctured with the admiration of the noblest romance, or the chivalry of earlier days, he will dwell upon and hallow the record of one, whose knightly and generous feelings, whose chivalrous honour, and soul of high daring, would seem to place him by the side of the Cœur-de-Lion,—the Montmorency, and the Bayard of former ages; while the mental attainments, the classic eloquence, and sound application of the fruits of later knowledge, so apparent in this gifted nobleman, will rank him not only as a star of our country's Augustan era, but as one of the ablest patrons of it's since more matured Science and Philosophy.

Although of seeming robust and strong constitution, when our late Governor-General, as the Earl of Moira, first arrived in India, his Lordship was by no means new in public life, nor unadvanced in years. He was born 1754, and shortly after finishing

his studies, which must have been well directed, for his classical acquirements and reading were eminently conspicuous, he attracted considerable attention in America, as a young and brave Captain of Grenadiers, then on the Staff of Sir W. Clinton's army; and before the peace, as a Brigadier. His subsequent conduct of an army, under very perilous circumstances, on the Continent, has been much praised by military men; and when, in 1805, he was appointed Commander-in-chief in Scotland, independent of the able discharge of his duties, the unchanging amenity and condescension of his manners attracted public admiration, and the warmest personal affection from all who were brought within the immediate sphere of his kindness. His marriage occurred in 1804; and two years afterwards he was called to the Cabinet, as Master-General of the Ordnance. His appointment of Governor-General of British India took place in December, 1812; and,

in the following October, his Lordship arrived in Bengal, when our situation, and the relations of the Honorable Company with other States, soon afforded ample opportunity for the continued display of his military and other talents.

There had existed, for some time previous to this juncture, a speciousness of repose in our Indjan possessions. After the successful results of the expeditions to the Mauritius and Java, there was little apparent call for the exertion of force in support of our Eastern Empire; and, excepting the punishment of some refractory chieftain, or the seizure and dismantling of some rebel post, all was peacefulness and outward tranquillity. A considerable reduction had been enforced in our military expenditure, and consequent seeming increase in the revenue; troops were disbanded, and even farther economy was held forth to the anxious wishes of the home authorities. But in an empire, constituted like India,

45849

diminished military means, and open relaxation of power, are poor preservatives of tranquillity; and the truth of this was too clearly exhibited in the early consequences of the reduction. Notwithstanding the decrease of expenditure, the state of the Treasury was far from flourishing on his Lordship's taking charge of the Government; and he found himself called upon at once to enter upon no less than five or six serious discussions with different armed powers, who were each at variance with the Company, on some point or other of alleged dispute. The weakened state of our army, equal only to the police and internal protection of the country, admitted at the moment of temperate explanation only, and most cautious negociation with these states. All differences were, however, shortly adjusted, excepting with the Nepaul Government; whose outrageous and aggressive conduct left no alternative, but a direct appeal to arms. This State by our late temporising

policy towards it, and it's own constant invasion of it's unprepared neighbours, had become formidably possessed of the whole line of our Northern position, and had even descended to our terriorties, and boldly asserted it's claim to all the provinces north of the Ganges. This war was therefore immediately resolved upon, and an increase to our treasury ably and seasonably obtained, from the friendship of the Nawaub Vazier of Oude. His Lordship's masterly application of the means at his disposal was now plainly perceptible. The military force was strengthened and re-established; and it's resources every where arrayed to the best advantage. His thorough acquaintance with every detail of an army, was also particularly conspicuous; his instructions and personal suggestions to the different departments and branches of the service, were as singularly complete in minutiæ, as they were powerfully valuable in extent. But the difficulties opposed to him were of no

common stamp. Our ignorance of Nepaul was to be surmounted; the first points of assault, even, were to be selected and explored; our troops to be prepared for a perfectly novel warfare; and, in fact, some of the leading instruments of his Lordship's acts, whose rank in the service claimed the execution of his plans, were to be tempered, excited, or controlled. How all this was effected is well known; and even during the first disheartening campaign against the Goorkahs, Lord Moira gave noble promise to the Indian Government, of what in Central India his genius afterwards so fully confirmed.

The assured and easy success of the second campaign against Nepaul, left his mind at liberty to turn to other and prouder objects; and never did any country exhibit a grander field for the display of political or military abilities, than Hindoostan at this juncture. The hordes of Pindaries, whose ravages extended over the

greater part of Southern and Central India, protected too as they were by the powerful Mahratta states, to whom they were either useful or profitable, formed, by themselves, no despicable object for the infliction of vengeance. But when it is remembered, that they were in the heart of the territories of these powerful Mahratta confederates, who were well known to be waiting only their own time for a general rising against the British power, the task of their suppression became linked with more important and formidable considerations.

To prove to India, too, at this critical moment, the insufficiency of her vaunted fortress, when the British strength was brought to bear against them, a splendid and terrible example was exhibited in the bombardment and seizure, after a few days' resistance, of the strong fort of Hattrass; followed up by the discomfiture of some of the more turbulent leaders of the Jaut tribe.

Scarcely had the impression subsided, that this fearful display of our means had been calculated to convey, ere, in 1817, the troops of the three Presidencies were silently in motion, and the different points simultaneously approached which it was necessary to occupy. Nothing could exceed the fortunate seizure of the *time* for these operations. A few months later would have seen the whole of Central India in arms, and the Mahratta confederacy headed by Scyndiah, and backed by his disciplined Brigades and Artillery, in full force and angry combination against us. Other powers also were known to be waiting only by such an event, for the signal of their own defection: while the unexpected, unthought of, and astounding movement of the British armies, upon every strong hold or key to their military positions, defeated the immature projects of the confederates. The occupation of the passes in the rear of Gwaliah, which cut off Scyndiah from his intended allies,

and the introduction of an overwhelming force in the vicinity of his capital, effectually paralized and checked this Prince, the most powerful of the conspiracy: and when, one by one, the Peshwah, Rajah of Nagpore, and others, in the despair of their detected plains, respectively broke out, it was only to bring separately on themselves, irretrievable and instant ruin, and to afford the British Government a more ready opportunity of at once extirpating them as sovereign powers.

The treachery of the Peshwah and his instrument Trimbuckgee, although the murder of their victim Ganguari Shastree was not prevented, was still amply exposed and punished. This, together with the protection to the Nawaub of Bhopaul, the disbanding of the lawless armies of Ameer Khan, and the settlement of Holkar's states; and last, not least, (for it was the primary object of the war leading to such extensive results,) the utter annihilation of the Pindaries, all formed glorious episodes to the other mighty

events which completely established our supremacy in the East.

I have thus briefly exhibited a portion of the public claims of the late Marquess of Hastings: but it was in the more intimate relations of private life, that his Lordship's amiable manners and deportment to those around him, shone most pre-eminently conspicuous; and volumes might be written of the many daily acts of his condescension, and kindness of heart. The poverty, which it is so well known exiled him from the home of his pride and affection, in the declining years of his life, originated much from his princely assistance to others, particularly to the exiles of another nation; and many are the instances of benevolence, which require only to be rescued from that honourable obscurity, to which delicacy has consigned them, to adorn with still greater splendour the character of this most amiable nobleman.

In proof of this assertion, I am anxious to bring to notice a simple, and perhaps

trivial incident connected with his Lordship; which although circumstances of the kind were familiar to those immediately about his family, may be new to the generality of my readers. It relates, certainly, to humble and unimportant details; but still their very unimportance confers the more honour on his Lordship: and speaks loudly, indeed, in favour of the goodness of heart that could steal time from princely and weightier avocations to turn to the lowly and uninviting task, of privately encouraging the literary efforts of a young and unknown individual. The particulars were communicated to me by the obliged and grateful party himself, who some years ago favoured me with copies of the whole, and permitted my transcription of the original letter, which follows this narrative.

In 1817, when his Lordship was in the field with the centre division of the Grand Army, at the juncture when intelligence of the breaking out and movements of the

different Mahratta powers was daily reaching the camp; and expresses were hourly under despatch from Head-Quarters, with the various instructions, and developments of his Lordship's plan, which led to the subjugation of Central India, it occurred that a young subaltern officer of a native corps received an invitation to dine with Lord Hastings. The subaltern in question was one of the very junior with the army, and although the honour of such invitations was far from uncommon, and not under restriction as to rank, yet he was unknown to the Government circle, and had been heard of only by a very few, as the author of some literary attempts, which had appeared in the Calcutta publications.

At dinner, little occurred. Some highly interesting intelligence of a signal defeat of one of the Mahratta confederates had that day been received in Camp, and was, of course, the subject of remark and conversation. But his Lordship's surprising tact,

and capability of remembering the names of all introduced to him, and addressing each correctly, with some observation applicable to the habits or circumstances only of each, was here remarked, and peculiarly felt by the young man, who could not but be gratified by any unexpected notice of the kind. After dinner, coffee, as usual, was brought in, and the staff and others assembled were collected in groups in different parts of the spacious dining tent, when his Lordship, after conversing with the different parties, approached the spot where the Lieutenant was standing, and quietly turning to him, entered into conversation. After a few kind remarks, his Lordship took from his pocket a folded newspaper, and handing it to the officer, begged him to read it at his leisure, as it contained some poetry which he had thus put aside for perusal. His Lordship farther requested that in a few days he would return to the Head-Quarter's camp, and offer his opinion

upon the production. Shortly afterwards, bowing to the company, his Lordship retired.

The poetry proved to be a "*Hymn to Intellectual Beauty,*" which had appeared in the old "*Calcutta Times*" of that period.* On

* HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY.

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats, though unseen amongst us,—visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing,
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower;—
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower.
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—
Like memory of music fled,—
Like aught that for it's grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for it's mystery.

Spirit of BEAUTY! that doth consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not for ever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shewn,
Why fear and dream, and death and birth,
Cast on the daylight of this earth

the appointed day, my young friend attended at the Government Tents with the paper, and his Lordship, after going over the Poem, and pointing out it's peculiarities, was pleased to converse with him for some time upon literary subjects. His Lordship

Such gloom,—why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency, and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To Sage or Poet these responses given;—
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavour,
Frail spells, whose utter'd charm might not avail to sever
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone,—like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night-wind sent,
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart,
And come, for some uncertain moments lent;
Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes;
Thou;—that to human thought art nourishment,

at this interview, and at several others which ensued, (nor did the kindness by any means end here,) evinced considerable intimacy with the writers of the last century; and from his quoting at length passages from modern poets, and particularly from the dedication of Lord Byron's "*Corsair*,"

Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came
Depart not,—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave, and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;
I was not heard, I saw them not;—
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,—
Sudden a Shadow fell on me;
I shriek'd, and clasp'd my hands in ecstacy.

I vow'd that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine;—have I not kept my vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, e'en now
I call the Phantoms of a thousand hours,

he must have found time also for the perusal of later literature. His favourite poet, however, was Goldsmith; the unaffected melody, and yet almost prosaic simplicity of whose beautiful style he so much admired. Several passages from the "*Traveller*," and "*Deserted Village*," were repeated by him with much evident pleasure.

Each from his voiceless grave; they have in vision'd
  Of studious zeal, or love's delight, [bowers
  Outwatch'd with me the envious night;—
They know that never joy illumed my brow
  Unlink'd with hope, that thou wouldst free
  This world from it's dark slavery,
That thou,—Oh awful Loveliness!
Would'st give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
  When noon is pass'd;—there is harmony
  In autumn and a lustre in it's sky,
Which through the summer is not heard or seen;
As if it would not be, as if it had not been.
  Thus let thy power, which like the truth
  Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
  It's calm,—to one who worships thee,
  And every form containing thee,
Whom, Spirit fair! thy spell did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.

Some months afterwards, when the Governor-General was at Gorruckpore, my friend took the liberty of forwarding to Head-Quarters an "*Ode to Gratitude*," composed in the same unusual metre as the former: in reply to which he received from Lord Hastings the following Letter. The "*Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*," need scarcely be mentioned now to be Shelley's, though the fact was unknown at the time the "*Ode to Gratitude*," as I have just stated, was written by my friend.

"*Gorruckpore, May* 19, 1818.

"I regret that having been uncommonly occupied, in preparing Despatches for the Court of Directors, it has not been in my power to answer your letter earlier. Your verses on Gratitude are very good. They are free from the objection which exists to those contemplated by you as a model. In the poem to which I allude, there are many excellent thoughts well expressed, though

somewhat disfigured by the adoption of an antiquated usage, in making the final syllables of the participle present a substantive rhyme. But the mind feels an uncertainty as to what it is that the poet is addressing. There is no personifying Intellectual Beauty. Gratitude is a quality or feeling of which the action is precise, as well as common to all men; therefore a statement of it presents an image immediately and universally recognised. Intellectual Beauty cannot be the active impulse: it is the perceived fitness of conduct, of preferences, of selection, of relations, of mechanical exhibitions of objects; and all this is to be squared by standards which will vary in different persons. Whether taste refers to Ethics, or to sensible objects, it is confessedly unsettled, and liable to controversy in it's application. Now Intellectual Beauty can be only the conception which moral taste frames on a particular point, so that it is in it's very nature disputable, and

thence incapable of furnishing the same idea to every one.

"In the eighth line of your first Stanza, there is an evident misprint; 'it's pleasing power' answers to no other line, yet what you are likely to have written does not suggest itself to me.

"I have the honour, Sir, to remain,

"Your very obedient servant,

(Signed) "HASTINGS."

"*Lieutenant* ———."

TO GRATITUDE.

THERE is a feeling in the heart of man,
Pure as th' etherial source of vital heat,
Pure as the prayers which Angels' lips repeat;
It cometh not like thoughts which lovers scan,
Nor like the glowing sighs that youthful passion fan;
But yet it fills and fires the breast,
With that, which proudly dares the test,
Of days, and months, and years.—It's pleasing power
Palls not on minds where once it dwelt,
Or where it's charms are truly felt:
For where indeed that soul rude,
That can have known and spurn'd thee,—Gratitude!

Yes, Gratitude! 'tis thou can'st teach the child,
Yet wordless, on it's Parent's bosom lying,
To rear it's little arms, fond love implying;
Breathings it's thankfulness in lispings wild!
'Tis thou can'st bid the man, 'midst worldly care beguiled,
To cherish, honour, and revere
The guardians of each infant year,
Though other ties had fled, on Childhood's flying.
'Tis thou can'st bind in flowery chain
The trembling wretch, awaked from pain,
Who starts from fearful dream of grief,
And pants to bless the hand that brought relief.

What were the world without thee?—a wide den
Of soul-less wretches scorning social tie,
A wilderness of hate or apathy.
Hush'd were the Poet's song of feeling then,
Mute were the praises of beneficence in men;
Remembrance would but fiercely aid
The murderer's deed, and guide his blade
To bosom of unpardon'd injury?
While pale Oblivion's only charm,
That power to soothe the vengeful arm
In sweet forgetfulness of ill,
Would cease;—and sense of good alone be still.

Hark!—'tis the Organ lifts it's solemn swell,
Where meek Religion bows in holy love;
Now rising anthems hymn the God above,
And every breath delights of Heaven to tell.
Why seems the panting soul in ecstacy to dwell?
'Tis that thy voice,—Oh Gratitude!
Hailing the Power, all kind, all good,
Thus tells the soaring thoughts from earth to rove:

Thou bid'st the thankful mind reflect
On Him, the mighty Architect,
Who spake, and lo! a world was seen,
And light, and life, and joy,—a glorious scene.

Oft' have I sat me down, and wildly dream'd
Of bliss, my youth hath panted for in vain,
Till Fancy smiling led her fairy train,
And rais'd a scene where seraph brightness beam'd!
Oh! then, while visionary worlds all rapture seem'd,
How oft' a cherish'd wish arose,
To share my dream, my joys, with those,
Who once were kind to me in hours of pain.
And when, alas! the vision fled,
And with'ring Fancy droop'd her head,
Hath not my saddest, bitterest sigh,
Been still, that Gratitude's warm hope should ever die?

Memory of kindness past; whene'er I fail
To keep thee in my heart, to prize thee there,
E'en as the breath I breathe, and life I share;
May sorrow doom that life to trembling pale,
To dreary hours of care, that may not cease to wail:
What though my lowly thanks can prove
My only gifts of grateful love?
What though my proudest recompence, a prayer?
Yet in this breast there 'bides a thought,
With pure and blissful feeling fraught;
Nor would I change that thought's one thrill,
For every joy that crowns the worlding's will.

The reproach to the Indian community at the commencement of the preceeding Chapter, was much obliterated by a Public Meeting held subsequent to it's original publication; which was succeeded by a subscription for a Temple to the Marquess of Hastings' Memory.

HUMBUG

Humbug! Humbug!! Humbug!!!

JOHN BULL.

It has long been the avowed, and well-pursued purpose of a certain portion of the English press, to give chace to that most assuming and offensive of all monsters—Humbug: and whatever may be the sins of the abused and ever-abusing portion in question, there is still one redeeming virtue in it, namely,—the unflinching and indefatigable ardour, with which it scents and seizes upon the glorious specimens of that disgraceful quackery so frequently walking forth in our native country. Nor is the bitter wit and severity with which it fixes

and pins to the gaze of ridicule the many essayists and actors of over sanctity, would-be science, or too fervid public spirit, the least commendable of it's qualifications.

It is to be lamented, however, that no attention has yet been given by it to the vast field which British India so ceaselessly presents; and it would almost seem that we have been too sparing in those mighty appellants of aid and good will, in the shape of pecuniary votes by Houses of Assembly, by which the Western Indies have propitiated the editorial affection and patronage of so many of the stern, inflexible Catos of the English and Scottish Press. Be this as it may, they have seldom noticed Bengalees, with any thing like amenity or kindly feeling. Had they been as well acquainted, as we are, with the counterpart, and more than equal-paced examples of Humbug, to be met with also in British India, we may be sure that Theodore Hook the witty delineator of the bilious Nabob

in "Sayings and Doings," and that the *accurate* describer of pet Boa-constrictors and kicking Adjutants, would have trotted forth many a poor *Koee-hye* to the killing amusement of his readers.

Never, indeed, was Humbug, or Humbugging, (I know not the correct term for the essence of this virtue, and Dr. Johnson unfortunately does not apprise us, though he ably announces and instances the character Humdrum,) never was it more splendidly patronised than in the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa: with the other districts, countries, and principalities, in and without the happy code of the Bengal regulations. Very nearly with us all, from the highest to the lowest,—from prince to peasant,—the civilian, the soldier, the bar, the learned professions, the duftukhana, the outcry, or the counter, Humbug is the aim of all our acts,—the leading star of our efforts; and if I bound my field of it's daily practice and existence here, and include no further

objects in the outstretched circle of it's votaries, it is only that I, the BENGALEE, am most busy myself in the goodly employment of Humbugging. For while one of my main objects is to exhibit myself as a quiet, inoffensive, industrious, and good sort of creature, would it not be ruinous to mar the toil and set countenance of years, merely to give a luckless hit at those, who can strike harder, methinks, than my poor wit may do?

Is not Humbug in India reduced to a science? Look at the saintly frequenter of Churches, (an unfrequent character *this*, I admit;) the abstainer even from smiles on a Sunday; if Rupees but glean upon his sanctity, his conscience is ——— where? If he chance to be an agent or a merchant, he will talk of liberality by the hour, and affix his name, with princely benevolence, to the subscription for the family of some poor ruined devil of an adventurer; perhaps of a constituent, an Indigo Planter, or

country captain, whose bankruptcy has been sealed by the accumulating charges of interest upon interest, bond upon bond, life insurance, forced consignments and commission; with other glorious pickings for the agent, which enrich and fatten him, till he gravely doles out his post-obit munificence, and grants a poor portion of the plunder to the pennyless widow of his victim.

Lo! yonder Prince of Smiles and Hospitality! How affably he hails his guests; how he patronises the humble applicant, and "breathes bland favour" upon every friend! 'Tis all Humbug! He cares not two straws for the wide worldfull of us all. If a second deluge were inflicted, he would enact Noah without a sigh; and millions might drown beside his ark, so *it* were safe, and *he* in the calm enjoyment of his hookah!

And yonder fair Coquette, how she plays with the young soldier, and trifles with the best feelings of the boy! Does she love him?—Not a whit: she has no love for two

hundred and fifty rupees per month, and a bungalow. She likes *him*, it is true;—nay, has affirmed it often to himself, and wonders at his fears and idle jealousy of yon bilious and antique Judge of Appeal. But she ruins the peace of the deluded youth, that she may dance quadrilles with a good partner; and finally accepts the Civilian, that she may live in a palace, and spend four thousand rupees *per mensem*.

My once friend and contemporary, Will Woodby, next my superior here, and now member of Parliament at home, is a happy instance of the successful and unceasing practice of Humbug. He arrived in India with a tolerable person, a ready quickness of manner and remark, which passed for ability with many; and with a real northern ambition of standing well with all round, still better with all above him. He was restless, busy, and ambitious; and yet as intrinsically idle at heart, as the merest loiterer, or Beau Fribble of his standing.

There was no College, fortunately for him, in those days; for fag, at that period, he could not. But if a College had existed, he would have contrived to make as much show of hard study, as the steadiest. Persian and Arabic would have been the leading themes of his open admiration; and ten to one but the Examiners would have passed him through the languages, simply from the seeming fame and asserted extent of his attainments. He was at first appointed an assistant in one of the public offices at the Presidency, when he was oftener absent, than in attendance on the public duties; and if seriously enquired into, it must have been detected that he performed truly and positively nothing. Yet business was ever in his mouth, and if you met him at outcry, or at morning visits, or the shops, the livery stables, or the riding school, (a favourite lounge in that day,) Will was always in a hurry, always *going* to office. At his house too, Will played the same good game;

he was ambitious of the character of being clever and literary. This cost him more pains than his own inclinations would willingly have subscribed to: true, he had no particular want of modest assurance; he could speak on all occasions like a Hume or an O'Connell; but he wished to *seem* to speak well, and subjects unfortunately could not be prepared and selected without some trouble. Reading he liked a little, but it was the light and easy style of Fielding, or Smollett, or the romances and tales of a circulating library, which captivated his fancy. Nevertheless, he purchased a collection of standard works, and moreover a most splendid and stately reading desk: here he ever displayed a volume of the Classics, with marginal notes in his own pencil; and to avow his admiration of ancient lore, he would mouth away a few lines of Homer, and acquired by heart the leading verses of half a dozen books of Virgil's "*Æneid*," with as many

stanzas of a few of the odes of Horace. These he could at any time recite with good effect. But if you dropt in upon him cleverly and unawares, you would surprise him stretched on his couch with Roderick Random, or something not quite so good, claiming his delighted attention; and probably Herodotus, announcing itself in proud and eminent display on his reading desk, but untouched and unthought of, by it's unassuming possessor.

From Reviews he culled forth the character and titles of different works of our literature, and oftentimes selected a subject for bold descant at a dinner party. And strange to say, this *took*.—"Do you know Mr. Woodby?" said a Member of Council one day, "he is remarkably clever, and, I predict, will rise in the service."

And rise he did. Of his registership I never heard, for he was then in a different part of the country; but as an acting Judge, when little more than four years

resident in India, his fame rang loud in every part of it. He was indefatigable in Cutcherry, from sunrise to evening; he gave more business to the circuit than a dozen other districts, and if you believed himself, and he did not assert it unfrequently, *his* district was in better order, and more clear of decoity than even Kissenagur, under old John Elliott himself, of thief-taking notoriety. Ye powers! how he once held forth at a dinner in the Barrackpore Lodge, on the occasion of a January's meeting. *His* Police,—*his* Serishtadar,—*his* Omlah,—*his* Cutcherry,—*his* Jail and Kydees; like *Bayes* in the "*Rehearsal,*" it was all "*His* Thunder!" no wonder we soon heard of him as a confirmed Judge of Hooghly; and next as an acting aspirant in the Judicial Secretary's office, conducting it's labours, nay looking forward in a brief period to the Secretarial Sceptre itself!

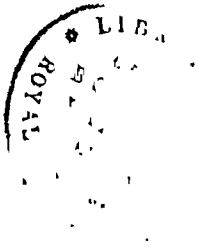
Now it was that Will began to shine as an orator. If a great man had occasion to

renew a portion of his liver, and meditated a voyage to Europe; lo! it was the signal for a meditated speech on the part of Will Woodby! He would write out fair manuscript oratory for every occasion and event, and learning the whole diligently by heart, let but the glimpse of an opportunity present itself, Will was on his legs at the Town Hall, or elsewhere, with a two hours' specimen, *ad captandum vulgus;* and I must add, most religiously, *ad laudandum magnos!* When great men, however, failed him, he would "do" a little benevolence, and hold forth in advocacy of a Free, or a Charity school; or, any other minor subject for eloquence. He was, in a word, the most public-spirited, the kindest, the charitablest, (as far as speaking went,) and the most laudatory of any man of the three Presidencies.

Well, virtue ever meets it's reward, and a very few years saw Will Woodby at first Judicial Secretary, then Chief, and from his

fame and high standing with the Court of Directors, he at length had "the honourable" perfixed to his name, and the honour of fingering the still more honourable stipend of a Seat in Council. My intimacy, of course, had long since ceased with him, but he was always "delighted" to see me to the last; at least he always said so, and looked most smilingly patronising and encouraging when we met. It is many years since he retired to England, and though he failed in his canvass for the Direction, yet his interest soon obtained him a seat in Parliament. But, somehow, in that house he defeated the hopes of all his Indian admirers. He spoke, once or twice, it is true, in his best style; but whether they had a distaste for eastern claptrap, and nabob oratory, or whether the field of Humbug was all pre-engaged, or whether as my wicked acquaintance Frank Touchem has often asserted, "they *smoked* him there;" I knew not. Certain it is, his exertions in

that assembly, and in his new sphere, have since been confined to a silent assent in favour of some great man, or in swelling the steady majority of some omnipotent minister of the day.



THE MOFUSSIL.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

La Ville est le sejour des profanes humains; les Dieux habitent les Campagnes.

ROUSSEAU.

IT was resolved I should go by dâk. The visit so long promised, so often disappointed, could no longer be deferred: so, the bearers having been some days previously written for, and myself fully equipped for the trip, my petarrahs laden with a due proportion of linen, one of them, together with the netting of my palkee, amply stored with sandwiches, biscuits, oranges, beer, and other accompaniments for a dâk trip, I soon adjusted myself in my silk pyjamahs, dressing gown, and slippers, and away we started cheerily by the light of our mussals.

Man, after all, is the mere slave of place, as well as of time and circumstances; and like his companion of the feline species, is truly a domesticated and home-revering animal. Far be it from me to confess that I am a prim, immovable, old-maidish sort of Bachelor, whom it is death to put out of his way, and to whom the disarrangement of the economy of daily habits, is an earthly misfortune. But still the misery of packing up, the horror of disturbing the cherished confusion, the heaped disorder of that *sanctum sanctorum*, and holy seat of slippered retirement, a Bachelor's study, was truly overwhelming: the very anticipation of the task afflicted me for days, and I sat and pondered over it's difficulty, long before I could muster heart to attempt it. The old guns, the scattered fishing apparatus, every ancient and discarded hat, whip, stick, bridle, portion of old harness, broken tool, and empty medicine chest, the collection of accumulated chits, cards,

newspapers, auction catalogues and pamphlets, all, all were dear to me. The very dust itself, that encased and embrowned them, enhanced their value in my affection; as the mellowing of age enriches the faded colouring of a Rubens or a Guido. I hallowed even the very sites where they had reposed and been enniched, as it were, in this the temple of my lounging. With what delight did I pounce upon an ancient roomy chest in one of my godowns, in which I could shut up, *en masse*, the whole of my last collection of letters, MSS., and other papers, to arrange or separate which, would have engaged me for months. But at last all was happily adjusted; and on the evening of the 15th October, 182—, the bearers were noisily conveying my palankeen through the northern suburbs of Calcutta, and in full pace and progress towards the Mofussil station of Sahibpore.

Happy, indeed, are those able and ready sleepers, who, no sooner dispose themselves

to rest, than the leaden hand of Morpheus lets fall their lids, and consigns them at once to deep and undreaming slumber. It is not so with me; and alas! more especially when journeying by dâk. I do dose sometimes, but the first jolt of the palkee, the momentary flaring of the too close mussal—nay, the very smell of the rank and fetid oil that feeds it, without dwelling upon the merciless importunity of the bearers at the close of each stage, soon dispel every thought of sleep; and leave me only to the refuge of my own rueful meditations.

And thus I journeyed on; long, long past midnight. The moon had risen in the heavens, and the chill air of the approaching cold season had induced me to wrap myself in my *rajye* and boat cloak. But I left unclosed the door of the palankeen, for the grandeur and solemn stillness of the night scene, as we passed along an extensive plain, broken only by the scattered topes of

mango trees, or the straggling villages, with their mounded tanks, had awakened within me a train of busy thoughts, till I could have contemplated the scene for hours. Except the voices of my own bearers, and at times the barking of some disturbed village dog, there was not a breath to dispel the stilly and seeming death-like solitude of the way. What a crowd of reflections stole upon my mind! I was thousands, thousands of miles from my own native country, far amid the land of the stranger and the subdued: in the invaded, the spoiled, the conquered country of the Indian. I looked around; the proud fortress, the embattled wall—may, the wealthy tenement and retreat of the former possessor of the soil, had mouldered away on the plain; and the descendants of the once noble and powerful of the clime were now lowly suitors at the portals of their foreign masters; or earning a daily sustenance in the few humiliating employments still

permitted them. They were menials, perhaps, or lowly followers in the very scenes, where the voices of their forefathers breathed only the edicts of command. And yet in the lonely and silent night, a weak, defenceless individual was journeying in peaceful safety amidst the vestiges of their humiliation. No restless and brooding avenger of his country's wrongs came to demand restitution from his foe; no hand drew nigh to wreak vengeance on the solitary straggler from the bands of his invaders. The millions of the East are then happily sunk in their subjection, even as the careless sleep of infancy; and if the scaring of their dreams, or the waywardness of humour, may at times break forth into a transient cry, or agitate them for an instant, it needs but the soothing, or the correcting anger of a word, and all is again composed to rest, and sinks into resigned and stirless slumber.

Heaven knows where my meditations would have carried me: but the Russians, Runjeet Sing, and the Schah of Persia,

were beginning to flit before me in the drama, which my imagination had conjured upon the Indian stage for my travelling rumination and amusement; when the changing of the set of bearers, and the wonted eternal "*Sahib, Sahib;—dâk budlee hooa, bearer logue kooch buxish mungta,*" soon roused me from my thoughts; or, as I verily believe, in spite of my complaining, from my own sound slumber and dreaming. And thus it was I journeyed on, till the accustomed number of hours brought me to my destination; and deposited me at the bungalow of my old friend and chum Tom Alport, now a grave married man, with a large family, and Civil Surgeon at the station of Sahibpore. I would not permit a soul to be disturbed; so a servant quietly conducted me to my apartment, where a bed was invitingly ready; and most willingly did I retire to it and repay myself with some good sound sleep, for the jolting and misery of my dâk trip.

I was awakened at rather a late hour in

the morning, by my worthy friend himself, who was standing at my bed-side, and we had a comfortable long chat together about our good selves and old acquaintances. We should have travelled back into some ancient events of Lord Cornwallis's era, or the courtier days of Lord Wellesley, if Mrs. Alport, who had already kindly delayed breakfast an hour and a half for me, had not deemed it full time to announce it in readiness. I was therefore led forth, and most warmly welcomed by the good and estimable lady herself, and then introduced to her daughter, a rather pretty and interesting girl of seventeen, who had lately joined them from England.

By dinner time, which in the Mofussil, is at the rational hour of four, when no guests from the station are expected, we had settled down into a most comfortable state of sociability. Mamma had communicated to me all the chit-chat of the neighbourhood: Miss Alport had sweetly played some of her usual

lessons, and gone through her hour of practice before me without ceremony; while Papa had paced me, for a couple of hours up and down the long and well-shaded verandah, and discoursed to me regarding his many plans for his family. Alport had been a sad wild fellow in his younger days, when concerned in several Indigo factories; and was formerly one of the first sporting characters of the Mofussil. He had also dabbled a little on the turf; but, my friend Tom was an indifferent disciple of Cocker after all, and but a poor arithmetician; and never could calculate, with any tolerable accuracy, the theory of weight in his various bets. He had capital cattle, but no judgment in matching them, and still less in backing others. One lucky hit, however, by fair and down-right hard running, brought up a main portion of his lee-way; and very wisely, he cut the matter short, and seceded for ever from the race stand. His stud was immediately sold off: and at present

he merely now and then attends the race ordinaries; looks knowing when a bet is proposed; tells long stories of Brown Bess, a once-favourite mare of his; and is much gratified when the young hands consult him about their stables: on which subject it must be confessed he is somewhat of a competent judge.

He soon let me into all his family history and secrets. His eldest boy was out in the army, steady and doing well. His second, by great good fortune and the kind recollection of a Director, whom he had once attended through a dangerous illness at Lucknow, was in the Civil Service. But the young dog had given his family more annoyance than all the brothers and sisters put together. He was still in College, after two years' trial of it, and his Mother heard such awful accounts of his Calcutta debts, doings, and extravagancies, that, after finding her long letters of epistolary reprehension and advice were of no avail, she fairly gave

him up in deep sorrow, and trembled at each day's dâk, in anticipation of learning some fearful calamity. Papa, however, always declared he was a fine young fellow, and only strove to look grave and mysterious when they called the lad a chip of the old block. "As for his debts," he said, "they'll bring him up and punish him in good time, and who can put wise heads upon boys' shoulders." They expected him on a visit in a month or two, if he could get out of College, of which there were hints of every chance of success; for, unknown to many of his compeers, he had lighted the midnight lamp to his studies for the last few weeks, and was seriously disposed to escape the Buildings. His Father added, with something like trembling in his voice, which I affected not to remark, but well understood, that "the young scamp was a good hearted lad at the bottom, and was secretly resolved not to distress his poor doting and affectionate

Mother any longer." The eldest son had just been appointed Adjutant of his regiment, leaving the whole family in admiration of his acquirements and promotion. There were still, however, four or five in England, and the old gentleman told me, with a rueful face, that the girls were the very devil to educate and bring out; that Maria had cost them last year, including her last masters, outfit and voyage, nearly 10,000 Rupees. "And now," he continued, with a half doleful expression of countenance and manner, "the silly girl is anxious, we all believe, to throw herself away, on a young subaltern in cantonments here, without a rupee but his pay; and who has nothing to recommend him but a baby-like, handsome set of features, writing verses, sketching in Maria's Album, and dancing quadrilles like a puppy."

After some farther disclosures and communications, I made out quite a little romance in my old friend's family. It appeared

that Mr. Chillum, the Magistrate, a very excellent, good sort of a man, who was just beginning to rise above the world in his agent's books, and recover the effects of the Buildings, Calcutta subscription pack, Champagne tiffin parties, and other first claims on the griffinage of a civilian, was now an avowed suitor of the pretty Maria. It is true, the climate has began it's ravages on Mr. Chillum, and he is meditating a voyage to China, for his liver; but he has Mamma's open and decided approbation, and teases the young lady most incontinently at every party of the station. Still, her averted looks, and the stealing glances that unconsciously follow her young subaltern, have told a tale to many: and prove, in her estimation, how much Lieutenant Aylmour's lowly claims excel the rank and worldly advantages of the haughty but unprized Judge and Magistrate, Alas! for the latter—

" His gifts, his constant courtship nothing gain'd;
For she, the more he loved, the more disdain'd."

At a Mofussil station, the usual complaint on every side, and with every member of the society, is the unhappy dulness of the place. I remember a foreign lady in the upper provinces, whose invariable remark, after the necessary commencement of all Indian conversation,—the extreme unprecedented heat of the individual and particular day,—was ever in lamentation that the station was *bien triste*. The young men had at length appended to her the title of Madame Triste, and she was known by no other. There is hardly a letter from an up-country cantonment, or civil station, that does not contain the expression—"we have been exceedingly dull of late." If from an old hand, the complaint is the dearth of news, with no essential changes rumoured in the Government or high offices, to afford matter for speculation or comment: if the epistle be from a military man, it is sufficient that he has been for a few weeks at the station; then, like the sailor on

shipboard, he is at once a privileged and licensed murmurer: but if a young lady be the fair inditer, she deplores the dulness, because there is but one ball, with a few dinners, in anticipation; and because the men are very stupid, or possibly, though this is but casually hinted at in the postscript, there are not two *eligibles* in the whole vicinity.

As for myself, although my old friend, for the first few days, has been continually apologising about the apprehended *ennui* of the place, and wearying himself and his guest most unmercifully, in seeking out the supposed necessary wherewithal to amuse; yet it would be difficult indeed to impress me, who am just escaped from Calcutta, with the conviction that any situation in the country, with tolerably decent friends, and without any positive bore, or *desagrément* in the way, could deserve the character of eternal dulness, with which the habit of talking and complaint has so stigmatised the Mofussil.

Time, to the larger portion of the Eastern community, excepting always the overworked civilian and Calcutta merchant, is the direct opponent to the Anglo-Indian's happiness; and it may not be asserting too much to add, to his health and moral feeling. From the moment of leaving the morning couch to the hour of again seeking it's unblest and unsoothing retirement, the aim of many is not to seize, improve, or rationally enjoy the passing day, but how to drive it hurriedly away; how to destroy and obliterate it's very being and existence! From breakfast to noon, there may be a few forced dispellants of the hour; a morning visit or two; an occasional attempt at the performance of an official duty; the inspection of a stable; the trimming of a horse's mane or tail—nay, the more able exercise of skill in cutting a terrier pup's ears; followed by a solemn debate and elucidation of the subject, together with an interesting discussion as to the better expediency of "*foxing*" or

"*rounding*" the ear. All this, with the adjunct of billiards, cheroots, and perhaps a morning game at Piquet or Loo, many contrive to exterminate the enemy till Tiffin; but, even then, the watch is ever in hand, amidst deep wonderment and repining that "the Time passes so slow!" After-Tiffin, although a new edition of cheroots, and possibly the now somewhat unfashionable hookah, may afford destruction to a portion of the afternoon, while the siesta may master the remainder; yet, with those to whose bilious habits is denied the luxury of the latter, how lingeringly the day lags on! How comfortlessly, how miserably they lounge about their bungalows; or wander, *en deshabille*, through their verandahs until the sighed-for departure of the sun enables them to dress, and creep forth languidly, to enjoy the same insipid drive on the same unvaried road, which day by day has wearied them for months with it's stale and cheerless monotony.

The asserted want of employment, the impossibility under such a climate of pleasantly and profitably distributing the time, the little inducement or opportunity or the mind to seek improvement in intellectual pursuits, or even amidst lighter resources, such as reading, music, or other arts,—these are the wonted and ready excuses to which people ascribe their state of listlessness and inaction in India. The climate and heat are triumphantly adduced as dampers to all exertion; and if, in reply, one might venture to suggest that, in the short history of British Hindoostan, there are brilliant instances to the contrary, we are informed that these are extraordinary examples that must have excelled anywhere; or we are then silenced by the luckless examplar of some premature victim, and asked "how long the exertion lasted?"

I have been led into these reflections by the odd coincidence of complaint, and the concurring identity of the observations that

greeted us at almost every house we visited, when my friend Alport "took me round," as he termed it, the station of Sahibpore.

A few mornings after my arrival, we got into his buggy, and away we drove; first to the Civilians, as they resided in the immediate neighbourhood. We paid our respects to two Judges of the Court of Appeal*. of that day; the Judge and Magistrate, Mr. Chillum; the Collector of Revenue, with his brother Collector of Customs; the Register, and one or two of their young assistants. At some of the houses we deposited our cards only, as the gentlemen were at Cutcherry, and the ladies not visible. After this, we drove into cantonments, and made a regular tour of the Bungalows; but if we except the ridiculous concurrence of all, in complaining of the dulness of the place, and which complaint came equally from the civil and military residents, there was nothing

* It will be remembered that this speaks of 182—.

particular in our string of visits. Our thing indeed struck me; my host, Tom Alport, seemed to be a mighty favourite every where: all were glad to see him, and he had something of good nature, either in his greeting or subsequent communication, for every soul he met. There was a young rogue of an Ensign, whom we discovered admidst a dense cloud of smoke from his cheroot; he reminded my old friend, who vainly affected to look grave before me, of some late jollification at their Mess, when it would appear they detained the Civil Surgeon a few hours beyond midnight; and of which, by the bye, I had heard, very deploringly, from his good lady since my arrival.

I must make one exception to the idle and unemployed, that we met with in our various calls; it was the young subaltern, Mr. Aylmour, who was busy writing as we entered. He was evidently surprised and gratified by the visit paid him by the father

of Miss Alport. After being seated for a few moments, I had leisure to look around me, and saw a decent enough little library in one corner of the room, and an open colour box, with materials for plan or landscape drawing, and a few sketch books, &c. On a side camp table were Persian and Hindoostanee dictionaries, with the Nuchliad, Gulistan, Muntakha-bat-i-hindi, and one or two other books of that class, which he must have been studying in the morning; for chairs for himself and his Moonshee were yet remaining unremoved from the table. A hunting cap, frock and half hunter, which I perceived on a clothes-horse in the next room, with a few favourite billiard cues, and a double-barrelled gun cleaning in the verandah, impressed me, however, with the conviction that my young lover could mingle field sports and other amusements with his more studious avocations. I verily believe, it was this part of his character, that prevented my friend

Alport from downright cutting him; but, if he had any secret leaning towards the young gentleman on such account, it's avowal was religiously suppressed in obedience to the still, but omnipotent wishes of his lady; and he assured me that he only called on the lad, as it would have been rude to have excluded his bungalow in the general tour of our visits. There had been something of confusion in Aylmour's manner at our first entrance, which, however, soon wore off, and he shortly evinced himself a pleasant, unaffected young fellow. Perhaps his employment at the moment we dropt in, might have occasioned his embarrassment. He was writing in a lady's Album, and my eyes very innocently and unconsciously caught, during our conversation, the first two lines.—

> "And if you love me, why withhold
> The one sweet word, mine ears to bless!"

He speedily shut up the book, and on a splendid gold medallion on the outside,

appeared the name of MRS. PERMIT, the lady of the Collector. It might, of course, have been the seeming idle and unprofitable nature of his task, which brought the blush to his youthful, and, in justice to Maria's taste, I must add, very handsome features.

After quitting the Lieutenant, my good friend remarked to me that "he was a prime, hearty chap after all;" while I secretly determined to help, aid, and abet, to the best of my humble ability, and as far as should in me lay, the very proper and anxious wishes of the young folks: and this too, as, in my opinion, the best and kindest return I could offer for the unfeigned and ceaseless hospitality of my old friends, the Alports.

But our next and last visit for the morning brought us to the spacious and comfortable lower-roomed house of Colonel Bonassus; a veritable specimen of a Company's field officer of the old school. He was slightly known to me, many years ago, but

his life and circumstances were once related to me by a cousin of my own, previously in the same corps, and I cannot do better than close my tour of introduction to the station, by briefly introducing the Colonel, also, to the better acquaintance of my readers. Colonel Bonassus, in his early career, had been truly unfortunate in his promotion. He came to India somewhere about the year 1780, just before that happy period when the liberality of his Masters had reduced every possible establishment both civil and military. It occurred that three or four hundred subaltern officers were made supernumeraries, on ninety rupees, eight annas per month; and, like the hardy Spartans of old, were expected to bear this infliction on their youth, health, and vital prospects, without wincing or a murmur. After the period, therefore, of twenty-two years' service, at which the Solons of East Indian enactments, and the framers of military remuneration, had then established

that our officers might retire to their native country, and rest there from their labour, with a withered heart and broken constitution, on the noble provision of the *full* pay of their rank,—Lieutenant Bonassus, for such was then the extent of his advancement, was utterly unable to avail himself of the indulgence. He had before this served on the Coast, and against the northern Circars; at Seringapatam; and by singular chance and removals, opportune or otherwise, as people may deem them, was present at our failure against Bhurtpore; was in Monson's retreat; and narrowly escaped sharing the fate of the gallant Lucan, so cruelly sacrificed on the advance of Holcar, that the first day's flight of the unhappy Monson might be made good. He was in the assault of Komonah and Bowanee, and other employments in the upper provinces against mud forts and rebel zemindars, till, after these services, the worn-out lieutenant of twenty-two and more years' standing had the option of retiring, to be

happy in his old age, on the princely pension of somewhat about eighty-eight pounds, five shillings per annum!

By this time, however, and according to good old custom, Lieutenant Bonassus, although no married man, had a tolerable large family to provide for: retirement from the army was therefore quite out of the question. Fortunately for him, he was of tougher materials, and less sensitive emotions than many who now help to fill, and adorn with their monumental effigies, the various walled enclosures in the neighbourhood of the different stations of the army. And though he grumbled with the loudest, yet when he *did*, at last, get his company, Alexander the Great, on the tallest pinnacle of his triumphs, was a sorry jest to him! I know not whether he was then included in the proud Triumvirate, so well known to Bengal military men, who

"Ne'er would condescend
To herd with Subs, or call a Sub their friend!"

yet it was certain, that, whatever Captain Bonassus's person might have lost of it's bloom, youthfulness and activity, during his long lieutenancy, it now gained every thing in stateliness and becoming demeanour, on the happy attainment of the honours and eminence of a Company!

It was true, his time had often hung heavily on his hands, for he had no resources within himself; but he could tell you Hume-like histories, as to length, of every service he had seen; and if he once got you into Monson's retreat, you were as distressed, as wearied, as bewildered and assailed, as the poorest fugitive of that army, long before he brought you within mention of the wished-for haven of Agra. Bonassus never in his life read for three whole hours. They accused him once, indeed, of commencing a course of study and reading, on his coming near a large station with his regiment; and that he took up Lord Chesterfield as a ground-work for gentlemanly

literature. But he invariably fell asleep after a few pages, and one of the wags of his corps as often contrived to put his mark back, till, after some days of reiterated study, and most grave re-perusal, the captain pronounced it "a very valuable and intelligent work, but evincing a considerable degree of sameness."

Since that period, in the routine of the service, and under the various changes of the army, he has attained the rank of Lieutenant-colonel, and commands the Regiment of Native Infantry at Sahibpore. He is a strange compound, in appearance, of a *Koee hy*, a military martinet, and a gentleman of the old school; of which he still pertinaciously cherishes the pig-tail; and, if it were not for his grown-up daughters now living with him, would rather too often enact, they say, the pleasant character of Colonel Oldboy. He used once to be eternally on parade, and was regular as the morning gun, until the never-to-be-sufficiently-reprehended

dismissal of Dundas, and the nineteen manœuvres; and the modern, and, as he terms it, unhandsome introduction of Torrens' new practice into the army. This fairly posed him, and brought on, as he admits, a most bilious abhorrence of parade. But he still has the officers very frequently about him, makes them breakfast with him on muster mornings; and gives a regular "blow out" on Christmas, the King's, and his own, birth-day. He never dispenses with the daily attendance at his house of the Adjutant and Quarter-master, at the orderly hours; and the scandal-coteries of the corps say, he does this with an eye to the staff-appointments for his daughters. How he stands at Head Quarters, or with the Supreme Government, it were rash to surmise; but if they have a respectable opinion of his military character, the repeated disregard and supercession of his claims for the various commands of the army, might well be as worthy of surprise to all,

as with him they are a wearisome and endless subject of complaint.

On the second day after the tour of visits which I have just described, I was witness to what many would term a *Scene* at Alport's, of an interesting, and yet, in some measure, so ridiculous a nature, that I hardly know of what class to determine it. I shall therefore leave my readers to form their own judgment, and simply hasten it's relation, as official men would say, "for their immediate information and guidance." To proceed, however, in due form, it will be necessary to turn back to a few initiatory events of the day.

At the wonted ceremonial of breakfast on the morning in question, and at that cheerful Mofussil meal, where beam forth firm home-made butter, delicious bread, splendidly fresh ruee-muchee, with Hindoostanee cake, cuwab, and kidgiree,—for my old friend shines in nothing more than his hospitable *hazree*,—we were honoured with

the company of Miss Alport's judicial and magisterial lover, Mr. Chillum. He came over in his tonjaun, preceded by the full public allowance of personal *suwaree;* nay, I verily believe I counted sixteen or eighteen spearsmen, pykes, and burkundosses, who ushered in and announced, in due style, the tonjaun of the burra sahib, as it entered the well-trimmed compound of the truly-honoured Civil Surgeon.

I had now an opportunity of seeing Maria's elder swain, to more advantage, and with better means of observation than before. He had a gentlemanly exterior, it must be confessed, and some years ago may have been in possession of good looks. But former habits, something of years, and a goodly portion of climate, had now played sad havock with his person, and sallowed over his small and very inexpressive features. His mode of address, also, betrayed *too much* of the gentleman in it, however strange the assertion may appear; and the prim

ultraism of his white linen dress, in which the fashionable and latest improvements were neatly, but oddly dove-tailed into the still cherished style and mode of the year forming the revered epoch of Mr. Chillum's official debut in India, could not fail to strike even an antiquated observer like myself. His stiff, full cravat of former days, composed of a pad, and two or three handkerchiefs, with the *tie* somewhat in the shape of two rosettes, primly placed at the very top of the edifice, and immediately at the point of his chin; all this, surmounted with a *well-congied* modern shirt collar, gave his neck a fixedness and immobility of appearance, which looked fearfully quaint, and added not a little to the unhappy stiffness and hauteur of his demeanour. By the way, the fame of this portion of Mr. Chillum's outward adornment had reached the Writers' Buildings in Calcutta; for I understand that young Alport had written up to Maria, and begged his sister's kind

intercession with her lover for a pattern, or full description, of this most "immaculate tie!"

Mr. Chillum did not fail to assure me, after we were seated, and it must be observed also, after he had obtained no return nor encouragement, for many amiable looks, and superabundantly polite things, he had addressed to Miss Alport; that he had taken this early opportunity of returning my very kind visit of the day before yesterday. —"With this view, he had done himself the pleasure of breakfasting with his friend the Doctor; particularly as his attendance in Cutcherry prevented his visiting at the more formal and customary hour of noon.

Portions of this intimation were conveyed with becoming, and very intelligible emphasis; while mamma essayed her utmost to make amends for the incivility and apathy of her daughter, and I really was unaware, before this, that the old lady could talk so eloquently and so much. Mr. Chillum was

complaining of his servants; and Mrs. Alport tendered her kindest and readiest assistance to replace them with better. Then she was in perfect rapture of gratitude at a dalee of early green peas, which he had lately sent her from his own garden. She once or twice informed him that she had a boat shortly to leave Calcutta, with supplies for the cold season:—"Could it prove of any service to Mr. Chillum, to offer part of the accommodation for his stores?—but at all events, he might indent freely on her's, on their arrival! He must not be in a hurry, and why think of Cutcherry?—He surely, for one day, could steal half an hour from the Court!—And after breakfast she intended to beg Maria to play to him the air which he admired so much at Mr. Permit's, and for which she had written only yesterday."

Poor Maria looked more unhappy than ever: but no sooner was the cloth removed, and the hookah duly introduced, than the

piano was opened, and at mamma's reiterated request, the unfortunate girl was condemned to play, at that early hour of the day, a stupid air with some fifty variations; simply because it happened to remind Mr. Chillum of some favourite tune of the year of his writership, when some favourite belle of that favourite era, was wont to ravish with it the ears of himself and other collegiates of his standing.

Thank Heaven! at last the man took leave, as much to my relief as to that of poor Maria. He departed with an infinity of bows, and a smile of ineffable grace; lurking beneath which, I could decypher, nevertheless, no little mortification. The young lady instantly made her escape; but when she returned about an hour after, her swoln and tell-tale eyes betrayed ample proof, not only of what she had suffered from Mr. Chillum's annoying importunity, but probably from a secret lecture, also, which mamma, meantime, had been

impressively conveying. She was soon seated at her little rosewood writing desk, and busily employed in reading portions of some book before her.

I was at the farther end of the room, pretending to be as busily engaged as herself, with one of the once Great Unknown's novels; but in truth watching her every look, as if designing her for a study for the portrait of "Love's own gentleness," to be given to the world in some future lucubration: for I will confess me, if there be a feeling in the solitary bosom of an old bachelor, which, in it's interesting and gentle nature, may approach the hallowed, the indescribable love of a parent, it is that which an old and, I may add, affectionate fellow like myself, may still experience towards a young and innocent being like that before me; the daughter of a long-tried friend; and, in her looks and loveliness, the recaller of once fond dreams and foolish recollections!

She was leaning pensively over the book; and the position of the room in which I was placed, gave a very favourable view of her graceful, and, but for it's absence of commanding height, most elegantly formed figure. Her hair was gathered in large curls on each side of a beautifully fair forehead, with one or two large ringlets, which fell shadingly upon her cheek; and I would just then have paid very liberally for the happy elegance and facility of Chinnery's pencil, to have sketched her in the look of intense feeling she thus betrayed. She had thrown up her gaze thoughtfully, but yet unconsciously, to a window, a little removed from that where I was seated, and in my life I never witnessed any thing approaching the Saint Cecilia-like expression of that raised glance! Something had evidently awakened her emotion; I perceived her bend again and again over the book, and then proceed to extract some portion of what was before her. If it was

curiosity that now impelled me to her side, it was not impertinent, nor improper curiosity, and I approached the table, playfully enquiring what peculiar circumstance was so seriously engaging her attention and study?

She was confused, and immediately blushed her distress at any observation at such a moment; but soon unhesitatingly closed her book,—an Album; and pointing to the name of MRS. PERMIT, in it's well-remembered medallion and gold letters, informed me that she "was merely copying some few extracts which Mrs. Permit had allowed her to make, and who had kindly sent her Album for the purpose, with the music mamma had written for."

My mind instantly apprised me that the lady of the Collector, either from Mofussil idleness, or a favourable opinion of young Aylmour, in preference to Mr. Chillum, (with whom, by the bye, I had heard that her husband was officially and privately at variance,) was now engaged in the same

good and secret office as myself, of aiding and abetting the young folks. I asked Maria if I might open the book: and after the permission of a half kind of affirmative only, soon came to two or three things in the same hand-writing as the two lines I have already noticed: at length I turned to the continuation of the very lines themselves, and lost no time in reading the entire little production of Mr. Aylmour. It was as follows:—

"To * * * * *

And if you love me, why withhold
The one sweet word, mine ear to bless?
Or if those lips may not unfold,
And maiden fears the sound repress,—
Still let me in thy glances see
That you can love, and love but me!

Ah! if you love me, lady fair!
Regardless then of angry fate,
For thee, alone, I'd fearless dare
The world, in all it's 'whelming hate:
Then why permit the doubt to be,
If you can love, and love but me!

And if you love me, why delay
The moment that shall end my pain;
The moment which shall so repay
The pangs it costs that love to gain:
Oh! deign at once to bid me see
That you can love, and love but me!"

"Very pretty and very beseechingly romantic," I exclaimed, on finishing the stanzas, which I had wickedly read loud, and then asked Maria, if she knew the author of them? But before I could bring myself to look at the poor girl for a reply, who should be announced, by a card, brought to myself, but Mr. Aylmour? Any farther jesting or trifling, to add to her confusion at the moment of his entrance, would have been too bad; so away I hurried to receive him at the door, and detain him for an instant, till my new and pretty protegée should be sufficiently at ease to receive him. Her Papa was absent in the Provincial Battalion lines, on professional duty; and Mamma had announced that she should be busy for the morning, preserving some

young oranges, which she had promised to Mr. Chillum, and in which notable piece of housewifery she was peculiarly skilled.

After taking our seats, and the gentleman and lady had sedulously endeavoured to converse, without awakening observation from the tormenting Monsieur de Trop, now in their company, I at length suddenly remembered a note to answer in the next room, and walked away to my desk, to enjoy the consciousness of being secretly blest at the moment, by two at least, of my fellow creatures. I was not altogether ten minutes absent, yet abundantly long, I am sure, for the young gentleman to take happy advantage of his opportunity, when I could not help catching one or two involuntarily broken sentences, with the sudden and inexpressively soft tone of the "in tears, Miss Alport?" by the lover. Going also to a side table for a wafer, the half-kneeling figure of Mr. Aylmour at her side, was seen by me, before I could avert

my glance; but at that moment a servant also entered, with a summons for Miss Alport to Mamma.

Shortly after, I joined the young gentleman, who was with his back to the door, all alone, and affecting most industriously to admire a Saracen-like portrait of my worthy friend Alport, grimly designed by that eminent artist of the upper provinces, Loll Ghee; and which, by the way, no inducement could persuade Mrs. Alport to remove from it's present frightful conspicuousness in the sitting room. I let him continue his admiration for a reasonable time, but we had scarcely attempted a conversation, when the sound of distant voices, and one of them in anger, struck our attention. They came nearer and nearer,—nay, were entering the next room,—and now distinctly and at once burst upon us in the highest treble of Mrs. Alport—"I tell you, Maria, this proposal just received from Mr. Chillum must not, and shall not be thus rejected.

It is useless your denying your silly reason for declining it,—that impertinent young man, Mr. Aylmour, ————"

"Hush, hush, Mamma! for Heaven's sake!—"

"No! I will not spare you, Maria; you care not for our feelings! our continued and affectionate solicitude for you; our extraordinary expenses in your education and masters in England; all, all to be thrown away on a thoughtless boy of a Subaltern."

"In mercy, Mamma! *he* is in the next room!"

"In the next room! where, who, child?"

And now the whole murder came out! we were all confronted; Mr. Aylmour very angry; Mamma in hysterics, with her black silk apron on, for preserving young oranges; the BENGALEE endeavouring to soothe, and soften matters; and Maria, the pretty, the timid Maria, to my utter astonishment, suddenly throwing off the seeming gentleness

of her nature, and firmly, but respectfully, addressing her Mamma,—

"Sincerely, most deeply, my beloved Parent," she exclaimed, "I lament this: but I am no longer a child. True, this morning in folly, and overcome by my feelings, I have pledged myself to Mr. Aylmour. That pledge, for the folly of it has been only in it's too early admission, will be eternal with me; but it's fulfilment, however distant, shall depend only on my parents' most full and willing approval." Then, turning to her lover, who seemed mute in his admiring astonishment and gratitude;—"You must retire, Mr. Aylmour," said she, gently offering her hand, "This is no place for you just now: when your presence is sanctioned, and more kindly received, you need not fear that I"—she stopped,—her momentary firmness failed her, and amidst a burst of overpowering tears, I escorted her to the door of her own apartment.—When I returned, the room was empty!

THE MOFUSSIL.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Quando ullum inveniemus parem ?
HORACE.

THE very afternoon of the day I have just described saw me in close confab, in cantonments, with my new acquaintance, Mr. Aylmour. We had an uncommonly long walk up and down the Verandah of his little Bungalow; and before we parted, I learned all that my young lover had to communicate of himself, his affection, his hopes, and his future prospects. Of hope; he had abundance, for after his beloved Maria's avowal of this morning, what had he more to think of, or desire? But, as for the future, true, he would not subject one so

dear to him to the annoyances of marching about with the regiment, amidst the luxuries only of his present means. But had he not received a most favourable reply, only a few days since, to an application for the Quarter-master General's department? did not the Military Secretary to his Lordship announce to him, that "his name was upon the list of candidates?" After one or two close enquiries, I found that Mr. Aylmour had lately transmitted a recommendatory letter to the Governor-General, from a gentleman of considerable property of Leicestershire, a county neighbour, and late brother-sportsman of his Lordship; but although the Lieutenant had no one earthly reason that I could establish, for his present over-sanguine expectations of success, he seemed, like all young aspirants, as certain of his wishes, as if in actual possession of a promise under the Marquess's own hand and seal.

I well knew that his only chance with

Mrs. Alport, in the present desperate state of his love affair, would be his success with a staff appointment. Not that Mamma was altogether as worldly-minded as might be concluded from this. In truth, she was a plain, good-hearted, unaffected every day sort of body who made Alport a most excellent wife; though we were all assuredly in wonder, in our day, what miracle, or combination of fates, could have brought them together! He, in his season of wooing, a wild, betting, ne'er-do-weel of a Sportsman; and she, a simple, quiet, pretty-enough daughter of a neighbouring Indigo Planter. But like most Mammas of a few years' standing in India, she had, by this time, acquired a delicate and very discriminative judgment as to the *eligibility*, or otherwise, of her daughter's admirers. The difference of the services; the nice point of relative situation; the distinctions of staff and salary, and the comparative advantages flowing from the snug fixture of permanent appointment,

opposed to the luckless inconveniencies of a scanty marching establishment; all these were as well understood by her, and as much a portion of her maternal belief, and hopes for her daughter's earthly happiness, as the very creed itself was, to her sense of religion, a necessary foundation for her future and everlasting welfare.

Under all these circumstances, I suddenly remembered me of pressing business, at the Presidency; and wrote forthwith to the Deputy Post-Master, for an early dâk. I soon found that I should have the benefit of company this time; for Mr. Neilman, described as a most hearty good fellow, an Indigo planter, had ridden over to my friend Alport's from his factory, having ordered his dâk for Calcutta on the same evening as myself. We soon found ourselves perfectly good friends; and on our way together, before we had proceeded half a dozen stages, were as mutually communicative

as two old *kooe-hyes* at home, in a stage-coach, or two young Subalterns, in any part of the world, on a night picquet. He came out, he told me, some fifteen years before, as a midshipman in the Honourable Company's Ship *Sir William Curtis;* but not admiring his middy's berth on board, on reaching Bengal, he fairly ran for it? Having no friends at the Presidency, he must have had an edifying sort of retirement, at a punch house probably, for the first few weeks of his surreptitious introduction to India. At last, he made bold to write to his maternal uncle, an Indigo planter up the country, whose agents, by return of dâk, were desired to pack off the young gentleman in a small boat to the Leilpore factory. There it was that young Neilman soon became an expert assistant, and after several years of hard fagging and galloping along the cultivation, he was enabled, by his uncle's retirement, and the aid of his agents,

to become lord and master of the works themselves, with the puckah buildings, bungalows, drying houses, vats, China pumps, ploughs, and I know not how many biggahs of cultivation, or thousands of outstanding balances!

For years, he told me, it was sad "*deek our miknut:*" regular "*hyran*" kind of work; and but for the princely kindness of a partner of one of the Calcutta houses, whom he delighted to hail as the "*sub-se bhula admee,*" it would have been "*ho-chuka*" with him long since. It is necessary to inform my readers, that my new companion, Mr. Neilman, had adopted, in his phraseology, a most happy, or, at all events, a most unceasing admixture of Hindoostanee aids and expletives. Half his native English had now given way to bad Hindoostanee. Thus he never dines, only *khana-khats;* he never touches wine, it is all *shraub* with him or rather *beer-shraub,* his only beverage. When he inspects his Indigo fields, he takes a *dékh*

at the plant, or *chuls* over the *kates:* he calls Alport his old *doost;* and conversing with his good lady, a little *bat-cheet* with the *beebee-sahib!* Without premising this, it would be difficult to follow Mr. Neilman through his present Eurasian, or Anglo-asiatic illustrations in conversation. But such of my readers as may find it difficult to keep pace with him, I can safely recommend them to the able expositions of that eminent eastern philologist and linguist, the Author of a very opportune work,—"The Orienti-occidental Tuitionary Pioneer!"

Mr. Neilman was giving me the history of his Indigo affairs, but paused to assure me he was *burra khoosee* that the Judge sahib had been *juwabed* by the young spinster at the Doctor's. "Lord, Sir!" he exclaimed, "he gives more *deek* to the poor *leilwalas* of the district, than half the zillah courts of the country. Some folks say he is fond of *goose*, but I think it's all regular *zid* with him. It was but last season I cut

my plant at some *ryuyts* of mine near Leilpore; it was all ready to bring in, when up came a gang of *loot-wallas* belonging to a *cala-feringee*, a low Portuguese chap in my neighbourhood; and *lattees* in hand, they *chull'd* off with the whole of *it!* Well, Sir, that bit of *zuburdust* work would'nt do for me; so I sent in a *durcast* to the Judge, brought a civil suit against the fellow; lugged him also into the Foujdaree Court for a *mar-peet* affair; and, just as every thing was *mokuddumah'd*, and my *Vakeel* announced the *Diggeree* in my favour, in walks my *feringee* friend with a host of *jootah-gowahs*, and I got my *rooksut* in grand style. I only wish I had the Judge in one of my Indigo vats! I'd give a tinge of blue to his biliousness, I'd warrant him."

The next subjects of Mr. Neilman's angry complainings, were the Calcutta agents, of whom, by his own shewing however, he had as little right to complain as most men;

"but he had got to the right side of these gentry; thank God!—Last May's account gave himself and his works all clear, and he'd make a new sort of *bunderbust* for the future! Why, the year before last," continued he, "they sold my blue at *arrye-sou rupeeah* the maund; and I was offered elsewhere nearly *puonee teen* for it all round, dust and broken, musters and all! But, never mind, my good fellow," he continued, "I've enough yet to give a bottle of prime *beer shraub*, with a spare *hookah* a *howdah*, and a sporting *hathee* for a friend at my Factory; and when you return to Sahibpore: the old Doctor sahib and you shall have a few days' *shikar* of it."

I only took leave of my talkative companion, as we passed the house of his agents, on reaching Calcutta. And I could well see, that in spite of his boasting, he yet stood in awe of the "Dear Sirs," even like a big school-boy, who still looks back with secret terror at the birch, as it

fearfully betrays itself in the well-remembered corner of the school-room! I saw no more of him in Calcutta.

After a few hours' rest, I turned my mind gravely to the *purpose* of my hasty and temporary return to the Presidency; it was nothing more or less than a most unpresuming wish on the part of the Bengalee, to see how far *his* interest would extend with great men; and humbly ascertain, if he could place his young friend Aylmour in the Quarter-Master General's department. I bethought me of various favourable channels to approach the fountainhead; and after a hasty breakfast on the day subsequent to my arrival, away I posted to pay my respects to one of the Government Secretaries, whom all declared to be the Arbiter Parcarum, and, under the supreme Head himself, the most influential of big men. Fortunately he was not a military person, and I must here entreat excuse for pausing to say one thing, which I have actually heard asserted, of

course without the slightest foundation, and my military readers must pardon me, who am no soldier, for this piece of second-hand and idle reproof to the chiefs of their community. I say it has been affirmed, that in the circle of Calcutta great men, the least civil, the least conciliatory, and, with a few striking exceptions, the least encouraging to their own juniors, and their own brethren of the same profession, are the many various magnates of the staff, who have chanced to gain for themselves the more exalted and fortunate stations of the official ladder.

I was ushered into a large house, and received stiffly, though as politely as you please, by my new patron. But although petitioning, anxiety, and solicitation were written in every feature of my face, and breathing in every tone of my hesitating articulation, yet I received no encouragement to disclose my wishes. After a few common-place remarks, and one or two

heavy pauses in the conversation, which the great man took no pains to remedy or enliven, ringing only the changes on one or two official and set phrases, in which the *State* or the *Government*, or the *Government* or the *State*, formed three-fourths of the words uttered; why I fairly came away as I went, without having the heart or spirit to broach the very subject that had brought me some hundred of miles to Calcutta, for it's sole furtherance and object!

The foregoing was a damper to my plan of *making interest*, as it is called: it at once determined me to step past all subordinates, and solicit an audience with the Governor-General himself. So I forthwith despatched a note to the Aide-de-camp in waiting at the Barrackpore park, and laid horses at Cox's Bungalow for the purpose of following it myself the next morning. On reaching Barrackpore, I took the opportunity of visiting Colonel Jhootboll, a very ancient acquaintance and ally of mine; most

renowned for his extraordinary shots, and marvellous escapes from tigers, wild hogs, and elephants, with more of eastern adventures, mishaps, and miracles, to his share, than any man in the army. At his hospitable quarters I got a very warm welcome, and most excellent breakfast; and found waiting for me a reply from the Aide-de-camp, appointing the hour for my attendance at Government-house. It need not be mentioned that I was punctual at the hour stated. On entering the Government residence at the park, and ascending the staircase, I was met by a gentlemanly young officer, who very civilly led me to the centre room, and begged me to be seated, until he should proceed to his Lordship's study, or writing apartment in the north-east wing of the building, and ascertain if the Marquess was at leisure.

Perhaps there are few things less enviable than those moments of anxious suspense and trepidation, experienced by a doubtful

suitor to patronage, when on the very point of introduction to the presence of rank and power. While hastily pondering over and conning an introductory speech, and nervously planning the best mode of prefacing the wished for subject,—how devoutly the suitor wishes himself with Captain Parry at the North Pole, or with Mr. Buckingham at Jericho, or any where, rather than in his present situation of most uncomfortable nervousness. As for myself, I had seen his Lordship but once at a levee; was known to him publicly, it is true, but still too slightly for so serious an intrusion. However, my state of suspense was not allowed to be very tedious; the Aid-de-camp returned to present me, and in a moment I found myself standing before the Governor-General in person. His Lordship had risen at my entrance, and moved slightly forward to receive me; politely pointing to a chair near himself for my reception. My eye glanced for a moment upon the Governor-

General,—on the noble ruler of British India, the late conqueror of it's central empires! How little is sufficient to soothe and tranquillise the heart of a suitor; how intimately, the eye scans, in a single glance the very mind and feeling of it's patron! I felt at once assured that I was in the presence of kindness and condescension!

I soon became myself, and capable of observing: his Lordship had on a plain silk undress coat, having relieved himself from his wonted general-officer's uniform, for the purpose of writing more at ease. On the table before him were several boxes containing papers or despatches, with some large thick quarto letter paper for his personal writing. Some of the boxes were open; and at his right hand was one closed, but with a narrow opening in it's lid, like a post-office panel, for the admission of closed and sealed letters. Various Secretaries' consultation boxes containing recent reports, minutes or despatches in circulation for the perusal

of the members of Government, were on a side table, awaiting their early turn for consideration. The punkah was moving by some simple mechanism, so as to obviate the intrusion of a servant, and the whole scene betrayed the study and retirement of an indefatigable, ardent statesman, but one necessarily systematic and methodical in the otherwise overwhelming magnitude of his public business. After one or two affable, almost kind enquiries, which proved that the Bengallee was remembered even after the slight introduction of a previous year, I was at once emboldened, without farther trespass on his Lordship's time, to enter upon my solicitation for Mr. Aylmour. I stated the public grounds of my application; adverted briefly to his own recommendatory introduction, as I believed, from home to his Lordship; touched upon the young man's assiduity and knowledge of the Oriental languages, and then dilated on his peculiar talents for the department to which he aspired.

At this moment his Lordship bowed to me, as in apology for the interruption, and rising up, proceeded to a drawer, and took out from it a small coloured plan, with the name of *A. F. Aylmour, Lt.* in the corner; "this I believe, is by your young friend, and a very creditable performance it is: Mr. Aylmour is not unknown to me." His Lordship then informed me, that some months ago, struck by the name, which was that of a Major also, once well known in America, and a personal friend during that unhappy conflict, he had been induced to make enquiry; and was already in possession of some favourable particulars regarding the Lieutenant, who had proved to be a grandson of an early brother soldier.

On hearing this, I hesitatingly ventured on an appeal to the well-known generous and somewhat romantic part of his Lordship's character, too often abused by others, as many have sighed to think! and apprised him of Lieutenant Aylmour's situation with

the Alport family. I faltered and paused at first introducing the subject, but his Lordship listened to me with such politeness, such evident kindness and attention, that I briefly detailed the whole circumstance. Never shall I forget the playful smile which illumined his benevolent and noble countenance, when he at length interrupted me by saying, "The young man's happiness then seems in a fair way of realization, for I have already handed, I believe, a memorandum to the proper office to ensure his succeeding to the first vacancy in the desired department; and I apprehend a vacancy has occurred within these very few days." Thanks were not permitted me,—I was immediately pressed to stay that afternoon to dinner at the Government-house, and the bow that acknowleded the grateful acceptance of the kindness, seemed to me as a signal to retire.

"They will be all rapture at Sahibpore," thought I, as drove down to Calcutta in

the evening. My dâk was again laid; and once more the accustomed number of hours saw me at the Civil Surgeon's Bungálow, whence I despatched a happy note to the Lieutenant.

THE MOFUSSIL.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

To paint the gloomy horrors of the tomb,
Th' appointed place of rendezvous, where all
Earth's travellers meet ——

BLAIR.

In a small community, the absence, by death, of one of it's members, the diminution of the ascertained and well known number of those around, throws a gloom upon the survivors, which the residents of a large and populous city seldom either experience or conceive. Amidst the more extensive communities, and we may here instance Calcutta, the decease of an individual may be deeply felt within the immediate circle of his friends; but the generality of people can know the event no farther than by it's brief record in the

public papers. Perhaps a few here, in their evening progress to the course, may meet the solemnity of the funeral procession; these may check the vacant smile, and stay their vehicles by the way-side, to pause in beseeming respect, while the mortal remains of a brother citizen are passing to their long, long home. But the impression lasts not beyond the line of mourners in the rear; and the next barouche with it's party of listless acquaintances; and the necessary exertion, and slight movements of recognition which ensue, soon dispel the faintest lingering traces of the late too melancholy spectacle.

But in a small society, the bereavement falls, as it were, within our own immediate ken; the home itself of all. Even where the deceased may have been barely intimate, he was yet of the few, whom the eye often recognised amidst the friendly circle; and in the failure of some slight office, some trivial but accustomed event within his share

of the social compact, his absence is yet felt, and the wonted companion missed and regretted! The vacant habitation daily meets the eye as we pass along, to tell the tale of it's present desolate loneliness, and denote the gloomy withdrawing of it's tenant. 'Tis as with the sad inmate of a cell; the removal of a companion of his solitude, of the very insect which had spun it's web for months before him, brings a damp upon the soul, and the heart becomes more depressed in it's new bereavement. In the narrow limit of a secluded station, where the affections, or even the simple regards of mere acquaintance, must concentrate, and fix upon the few, necessarily known to each other; 'tis a link broken in the chain that binds every one; 'tis an inroad upon the inclosure and fold of daily feeling; a speaking and fearful tale to all! Men, indeed shudder, and the heart recoils within itself, when, from the scanty band of pilgrims, one falls from among the few on the

narrow pathway, and sinks before themselves into the grave.

What pang is there like that which strikes upon our own hearts, and our nearest sympathies! We hear of war, till fancy, with it's colouring of romance, paints to us a scene of devastation; but we know it not, we feel it not, till the scourge spreads upon our fields, and the shell of the besieger falls beside our own tenement. 'Tis as with the warning voice in the land of Egypt; it was unheeded and despised by her people; but there arose amidst their own domestic hearths the wild cry of affliction; the first-born of their love were fearfully given from before them to the tomb, and then the voice reached them!

Such were my reflections after returning from the solemn, and to me most affecting ceremony of a Military funeral. For several days the communications from Mr. Aylmour had been brief and hurried; he was attending the sick couch of a brother officer, and

as he told me, of one much esteemed by him. And what proved more afflicting to the kind-hearted young man, and added to his solicitude, while he anxiously watched by the bed of his dying friend, were the melancholy circumstances connected with the scene before him. There was not, it is true, in this case, the sudden and awful stroke of death hurling to the grave, in this clime of dread uncertainty, the hale and the robust. But it was more painful, perhaps, to the eye of regard; the wasting and last sinking down of the frame, which the climate had assailed only, when the weariness of the spirit, and the failing of the heart, had prostrated it,—a too willing victim to it's ravages.

I soon learned the history of the deceased. Mr. Seymour was by no means so youthful as many when he came to India, nor was he originally intended for the army. Brighter prospects once awaited him at home; but his father, who held a high

diplomatic situation under Government was suddenly displaced, partly from the intrigue consequent to a change of administration; yet much it was feared from the opening afforded by himself, and the means of injury which his own misconduct had given to his enemies. The son received a Cadetship shortly after his parent's misfortune, and came at once from Oxford, where he had been for the past term, to join an Indiaman at Portsmouth; hastily proceeding for a few hours only to London, for the purpose of transacting what was absolutely necessary at the India house. For some unaccountable reason, some unhappy mystery, he refused to see, or take leave of, his parent before leaving England. There was a whisper regarding an engagement with a ward of his father, which attachment had been thwarted by him; and in the public papers had also appeared the report of a Chancery case, developing some peculiarly disgraceful transactions of the

guardian, which affected the property of the ward, and eventually forced the elder Mr. Seymour to fly to the continent. But whatever may have occurred, it was unrevealed, to the last, by the young man, though it must have sunk deeply, deeply indeed, within his mind. In his Indian career, apart from his brother officers, a stranger at the Mess, and a recluse in general society, he might have been unnoticed at all as the resident of a station, but for the affectionate testimony borne to his worth by the few, whom circumstances, as with Aylmour, had forced upon his regard. The interesting appearance also of Mr. Seymour himself, when met, by chance, in his solitary and distant rides, had awakened remark; and when the several residents heard of his last dangerous illness, a continued and lingering fever which wasted and at length destroyed him, frequent were the enquiries, and many the fervent, though unavailing wishes for his recovery.

At his death, the station order-book announced that a subaltern's funeral party would attend the remains of the late Lieutenant Seymour to the place of interment; and at the appointed time I was touched to observe that many like myself, who resided away from the cantonments, had come in, to pay their last respect to the deceased.

The attendance upon a funeral, to a person of common feeling, is at all times a solemn and affecting ceremony; but in this case, I know not why, whether, to me, the novelty of the little procession, the circumstances relative to the deceased, or my own peculiar state of mind at the moment, yet frequently as I was endeavouring to preserve the measured pace with the other mourners following the party of sepoys, I would have given worlds to have turned away, to weep outright: and how difficult was the task to repress the full tear, which every moment came swelling to my eyes. There was no regular military band with the procession,

but the shrill, piercing fife, unnaturally, as it were, attempting the slow and solemn dead march in Saul, the wistful and serious looks of the sepoys on the duty, and of others with side arms, belonging to the deceased's own company, who in evident sorrow were voluntarily following his remains,—the deep muffled beat, at times, of the large drum, and the low rolling of the smaller ones; and but for these and the shrill fife, not a sound, save the measured tread of the military: it was indeed a thing to speak to the feelings of every one! Not the nodding pageantry of the plumed hearse, nor the proud splendour of a Calcutta burial, could have affected the heart half so deeply, as this simple and little procession now winding before me.

It reached the enclosed burial ground. There was no clergyman then at the station, and the commanding officer of the post attended to perform the last sad duty to the remains of a brother soldier. The sepoys

forming the funeral party wheeled back, and arranged themselves into a street, resting upon their reversed firelocks, while the coffin, covered with a plain velvet pall, surmounted with the deceased's cap and sword, and followed by the mourners, was borne along between the line of sepoys towards the grave. It was here that the deep and manly voice of the aged commandant, whose grey hairs and tall military form we perceived, as he turned with the pathway, and led the solemn procession, now broke upon the ear. And when he reached the newly made grave, and proceeded with that most beautiful of all services, nothing could equal the indescribable solemnity of the scene. I have heard the office for the burial of the dead read by many, and the mind is seldom at such a time prepared to cavil at, or even admire the mere delivery of the prayer; but the age, the veteran and soldier-like form now before us; the clear unaffected fervency of the petition to his Maker for mercy to

the living—on this the removal of a departed brother, and companion in arms; never can I fancy a more intense impression, than that which such a scene, for hours and hours, conveyed to the mind. So completely had it absorbed me at the moment, that I believe I scarcely heard the filling up of the grave, nor the hollow descending of the earth; while the subsequent wheeling back of the sepoys was unnoted by me; and it was only the wonted firing of the soldiery over the grave, that recalled me to my recollection.

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"Well, really, it is very kind of Mrs. Permit to send us the Government Gazette this week, when I know it is constantly engaged to so many," said Mrs. Alport, on taking her seat at the breakfast table, about a fortnight after the occurrences just described.

"Some bad news in it, I would bet three

to one," observed Mr. Alport. "Some clipping and cutting of appointments, some reduction of medical allowances, or other gracious act of Government, which the lady has great glee in announcing. Mrs. Permit's attentions of this nature to her neighbours, like the fond music and approaches of a musquito, are generally so amiable and well-intentioned!"

"La Pa!" exclaimed Maria, affecting warmly to defend her friend Mrs. Permit; but, in fact, merely endeavouring to conceal the deep blush and agitation, which the appearance of the Government Gazette had excited.

"Will Miss Alport kindly read the paper aloud while they are bringing coffee?" enquired the BENGALEE, with a sly look at Maria: but which glance, as well as the entreaty, she pretended to have been lost upon her attention. "Well then, I must even put on my spectacles, and discover myself, what the Gazette saith in the shape

of novelty. Why let me see,—Oh! here are some new civil appointments,—Mr. A. T. Salthouse to be Judge and Magistrate of Sahibpore."

"Dear me! what is become of Mr. Chillum!"—exclaimed Mrs. Alport in utter astonishment; but immediately checking herself, and biting her lip.

"Mr. Peter Chillum to be Judge and Magistrate of the Jungle Mehauls:" continued I, still reading aloud, "Mr. Frederick Alport to be Assistant to the Magistrate at Sahibpore."

"Fred out of College! and coming here!" half-screamed mamma.

"And *there!*—Papa!" cried Maria, with tears of joy—"Mrs. Permit, you asserted, had sent the newspaper ill-naturedly; Dear, dear Frederick; how delighted we shall be to see him!"

It was long ere the burst of pleasure which this intelligence had conveyed, had subsided into any thing like calmness. Even

my old friend Alport seemed quite lost in his delight; he arose from his seat, and would not be contented, until he had seen the Government Order with his own eyes. He then shook me heartily by the hand in token of his joy, till I was half pinched to death in his ecstacy.

When again all were quietly seated, and while sipping my tea, and demolishing the muffin, with the Government Gazette at my side, I glanced my eye on another piece of intelligence.

"Ey!—what's this? They seem determined to make a thorough breaking up, and change in your station of Sahibpore.—'The most noble the Governor General in Council is pleased to appoint Lieut. Aug. Fraser Aylmour, to be a Deputy Assistant Quarter-master General of the Army, Vice Bradshaw, resigned.'"

All was immediate confusion; Poor Maria's cup of tea had unfortunately deposited the whole of it's contents in her lap;

and the consequent bustle and jumping up on every side, seemed to have checked all further perusal of the Government paper. Mrs. Alport and Maria forthwith quitted the room, and left the old gentleman and myself to discuss the late intelligence over our tea and hookahs.

"Your son, Alport, can prove himself a sharp young fellow, you see, when he does set his mind to it. I quite envy you the pleasure of having him with you for the next year or two.

"Ay, aye he is a young knowing one, I'll warrant him," replied the Civil Surgeon; "he seems to have an eye to the good sporting months in this part of the country! Why he'll not leave a hog, or a black partridge in it, before he quits us. I must write to him, however, to bring up a few good hog-spears; and as for myself I must have an inspection of my armoury, and brush up my Joe Mantons a bit,"

I am glad to see, also, that Mr. Aylmour

has got an appointment," I carelessly observed,—venturing at this moment of exhiliration, to introduce the subject of his good fortune likewise, as Mrs. Alport had just returned to the table.

"Why, yes," replied my friend: "I wish the lad well with all my heart."

"Who?"—what?" enquired his wife.

Our Maria's beau in cantonments," explained Mr. Alport; "he has obtained some staff appointment, it appears."

"He is a very forward young man!" was all the congratulation afforded by the good lady. "True" she added, "I bear him no ill will, and may be pleased for his own sake. I only trust that such early promotion may not render him more presuming."

Mr. Alport's remarks, and her reception of the intelligence, seemed so unlike her wonted general kindliness, and good will to all, that I raised my glance to look at her. Her eyes were immediately averted, but there was enough to tell me, that her

affected unconcern at the news, or rather her assumed disinclination, was only to cover the new impression, and the little vista of possible contingencies, that such tidings had conjured up to her view.

After breakfast, Mrs. Alport requested me to escort her in a few visits, which she had to pay in the vicinity. I well knew her present motive for seeing her neighbours,—to wit, the pleasure of talking of her son's expected arrival; but the maternal feeling and exultation so exhibited, were too natural and pleasing to permit me to deny myself the happiness of witnessing them. So the ancient family carriage, and the Doctor's old arabs were brought up to the door, and we drove off, after Mrs. Alport had carefully equipped herself for the occasion. She was perfectly gay, with a prim, new looking lace cap, and veil pinned up at the crown: a worked scarf of Dacca muslin, white cambric gloves, and huge bead bracelets, the handy work of Maria; an

ivory cut fan, with a deeply carved tortoise-shell card case, of most antiquarian dimensions; the whole set off by a very portentous sized black velvet reticule, with gold tassels, almost of the magnitude, contents, and character of one of an old Dowager's now exploded pair of pockets.

We visited several houses: wherever Mrs. Alport found they were yet unacquainted with the news, it was wonderful, the skill and able tact, with which she introduced the wished for subject of her son. With her intimates, there was ever a good-natured scene of unaffected congratulation; but where the respective families were only on distant terms, it was really laughable, if one had dared to laugh, to observe, first of all, the *pioneering* to the subject; and then, the matter-of-course manner, and assumed calmness, with which she adverted to her son's release from College, and his expected immediate arrival at Sahibpore, as events long contemplated as fixed and

certain. It was at Colonel Bonassus',—the military gentleman with his grown up daughters, whom I have before introduced to my readers, that Mrs. Alport had just played off the same cool unconcern on the very subject she was so solicitous to communicate to all,—when a fresh visitor was announced, and in walked Mr. Aylmour! This was very awkward for the Misses Bonassus, whose education, though it had been admirably and ably superintended at one of those first of all Calcutta seminaries,—Mrs. Durell's, or Mrs. Beck's, or Mrs. Bean's; yet, somehow, the course of their accomplishments, and the finishing of the Eastern metroplis, had not quite robbed them of the pleasing propensity of tittering to each other. And they tittered away most incontinently on the present occasion! Poor Aylmour blushed up to the eyes at finding himself thus unexpectedly seated opposite to his most awful of all opponents, the mamma of his Maria! and it was long before

the conversation could become general, or resume it's former composure. At length, however, to my inward astonishment and happiness, I caught mamma edging in one or two side references or observations to, or rather *at*, the new Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master-General; and at last she perfectly astounded me by a direct reply to one of his casual and general remarks! The ice, once broken, in a few minutes they were both engaged in positive, and, to all appearance, very edifying conversation together. His late repulse by her, was of course perfectly well known to all the station, and one of the Misses Bonasses sat with her mouth fearfully wide open before them, in admiration of the scene; nor was the wonder decreased, when the visitors took leave, and young Aylmour was seen handing the old lady into her carriage! While she was seating and adjusting herself, I briefly whispered to him, "You will find a note from me at home this afternoon; call at

our house to-morrow, or the next day, as if nothing had occurred: I will prepare all!" A fervent pressure of the hand was the only reply; I got into the carriage, and we instantly drove off.

Before Tiffen, I got Alport into his dressing room, amongst his medicine almirahs, surgical instruments, sporting, and every other apparatus: and in this *Sanctum sanctorum*, I spoke seriously to him about Mr. Aylmour and Maria; I adverted to our meeting him in the morning, and the friendly way in which his wife had received the young gentleman, notwithstanding his late discomfiture at her house. In fine, the point was so pressed home to him, that he plainly and decidedly told me, he liked the thing well enough himself, and if Mrs. Alport could be brought to consent, he was perfectly prepared to accede also. Now remained the tug of war, as I apprehended, with the good lady: not that I despaired with her even, after what I had witnessed;

but opposition was temporarily to be expected, and I tortured my ingenuity how to introduce, argue upon, and carry so delicate a subject. But when I joined her little work-table, and was preparing circuitously to lead to my wished-for topic, how was I taken a-back, when, with frankness, and the good sense, which I am ashamed to say I had little expected, she at once interrupted me, by saying,—"I perfectly understand your present purpose; you are desirous to intercede here for Mr. Aylmour. In a word then, I do not *now* object to him; I am a weak woman, as you, my worthy friend, would often deem me, but for our old intimacy, and good will; and I have not risen in your estimation, perhaps, by my late conduct towards Maria. I know, however, more of these things than you or many, can do; and it would have been the worst of enmity lately, to Mr. Aylmour and my daughter, to have acted otherwise. I never would have forced her inclination

in Mr. Chillum's case,—and some control was needful in the other; at all events, until the Lieutenant could support a wife. I shall now be most happy to see your young friend, whenever he wishes to renew his visits."

To close, then, a long business, and bring my tale to a blissful consummation, Mr. Aylmour, the next day, was duly installed in the happiness of an approved and an accepted admirer of the daughter. Frederick Alport arrived by dâk, a fine, handsome, dashing young fellow: the licence was applied for; the clergyman summoned from Dinapore; and a more happy family circle could not exist than that of my friend, the Civil Surgeon; nor was the least happy among them, their old Fidus Achates, that busy-body, the BENGALEE.

A SCENE AT AUCTION.

> And he himself seem'd made for merriment,
> Merrily masking.
>
> SPENSER.

It was a hot, steaming, most uncomfortable day, at the fag end of the rains. No breeze was stirring, save every now and then the damp, heavy, clammy breathing of a vapoury air, which passed over Calcutta, from the eastward, and sluggishly bore along with it the too convincing evidence of its late sojourning amid the Sunderbunds and the swamps of the Salt-water lake. Miasmata, almost thick and substantial enough to be laid hold for analysis by the erudite lecturers at the New Medical College, were stealing away, over the Mahrattah Ditch,

laden on the wings of the dull vapour we have described, and leisurely proceeding through our metropolis, on their fearful and fever-breathing errands. The doctors' miniature carriages, long since familiarly known by the professional appellatives of pill-boxes, were 'taking the change' most woefully out of Hunter's and Cook's hack cattle, and fast turning round every gateway and every corner in Chowringhee. The Honorable Company's medical compounders and apothecaries at the Dispensary had been hard at it for days in incessant manufacture and distribution of ipecacuanha, calomel, alterative and blue pills, and in the unremitting decoction of innumerable senna mixtures. The several undertakers had looked lugubriously at so many fast-following funerals, that they really began to find it marvellously difficult to 'do' the melancholy any longer; at the very time, too, their business was increasing so merrily around them. All their stock on hand,—their ready made

materials,—crapes, stud-nails and escutcheons;—their black mourning coaches, and blacker mutes, with broadcloth inexpressibles and sable merino long coats, were enjoying the very fulness of profitable and exhilarating employment. In a word, it was a September's day in Calcutta, in its most steamy and sultry shape, when all wise denizens of this City of Palaces sedulously eschewed exposure; and the only people mad enough to run about it, were the few, who were too well fee'd for expediting other men's matters, to mind over much about their own; or possibly a few money making Liverpool agents, and custom-house clerks, and shippers of country goods, too much occupied, and too anxious to get through their business before the approaching Doorgah Poojah Holidays, to dream about dispepsia or diseased liver.

And yet, in spite of the weather, all Calcutta, of a certain most respectable class, that is, all men who had little to do, or had

an atom of concern with the Bankshall and shipping in general, were put on the *qui vive* by an advertisement which appeared in the daily auction catalogues, morning papers, and *Exchange Gazette*. There was nothing, it is true, very peculiar in the advertisement itself. It merely announced that "at 12 o'clock precisely, would be put up to auction the good ship *Eliza* of 523 tons, with all her stores, rigging, spare sails, guns, and kentlage complete, to be sold positively to the highest bidder upon the upset price of 50,000 rupees."

"Bad luck to you, Captain Terence O'Niel!" said a little red-faced, corpulent, country captain, at the entrance of the auction room, and just getting out of an office-jaun which had reached it by the aid of an Acheen poney, "And is it you, who are come to bid against a poor man, and a brother skipper, and such a hot smothering sort of a morning as this is?"

"No, not I, Captain Dodds," said the

other: "I only pulled over from Howrah for an hour or two, to see how the sale goes on. I've done with these things, many the long day."

"Ay," rejoined the gentleman with the red face, "you're a lucky fellow, O'Niel, snug and comfortable—while we, poor fellows, are still at it, and roughing it all weathers!"

"What a stir, Dodds, this new Sugar Act is making among us."

"You may say that," replied the other. "Why, freight is up gloriously, and as for the shipping here, it begins, too, to look up, as much as of late years it has been on t' other tack. I suppose that fellow, old Blowhard, wants to take advantage of the turn of tide to-day, and sell his *Eliza*. What will she go for, think you?"

"Why, if he gets his upset price, he is a lucky fellow."

"You don't say so, O'Niel?—nay, to let you into a bit of a secret, I'll go beyond

that: I would bid a few thousand more myself for her. She's a capital vessel, and, as I am backed by Messrs. Snooks, Simpkins, and Brown, I don't intend to let her slip through my fingers. But who is that—Captain Terence?"

"Can't say; mayhap one of the Free Traders, or Liverpool men, with some of his passengers about him."

Just at this moment had entered a bluff, good-featured, devil-may-care sort of personage, with an old blue coat on; his hat somewhat the worse of wear, or rather the worse for the want of care it had experienced. There was abundance of shaggy beaver on it, but the edge of the crown and rim were manifestly distorted into a shape resembling any thing you please, except the spruce chapeau of a young writer from the college. The wearer of it was a jolly, weather-beaten, good-tempered, quiet looking sort of mariner: in short a very fit exemplification of a North Shields' skipper, or mate

of a Liverpool East or West Indiaman. He had an auction catalogue in his hand, and as he entered the place, was talking in a low tone of voice to one of the military officers who accompanied him.

"Now, deuce take it Mac. can't you all get out of the way? If you hang thus about me, you'll spoil every think. Are you not ashamed to be seen talking to a man in this toggery? Come, sheer off now—off at once, like good fellows," said he, as he turned up between the pillars, and tried to shake off a merry group of grinning subalterns, who seemed mightily pleased at some precious piece of wit of their own.

The bluff-looking personage then walked up the starboard range of the pillars in the auction room, and seemed to be very busy communing with his own serious thoughts and calculations. By the time he had sauntered along the range, and once or twice taken a quarter-deck turn on the

space about him, the whole of the crowd, fast congregating in the auction room, had began to close up towards the pulpit at the end. The clock struck twelve, and there were symptoms of the approach of the auctioneer to give effect to the object of the day."

"What do you think of it?" said captain Dodds, anxiously looking round. "Do you think, O'Neil, there'll be many bidders against me, this morning, I don't like the look of that chap in the blue great coat. He's after no good, depend upon it."

"He'll not fall athwart you:" replied the other captain in a comforting one. "Perhaps, after all, he is only a steward, or mate of some small craft. He'll not stand in your way, take my word for it."

"How shall I bid?" asked Captain Dodds.

"Why ease it out by hundreds, man," said O'Neil, "or by fifties. You mustn't go it hand over hand, or they'll run up to the derrick-head in no time."

It is worth while to look around, and enjoy a glance at the different groups, now assembled to witness the day's sale. There were many in the immediate vicinity of the pulpit, who surely could have had but little to do with the disposal or purchase of a 523-ton vessel. Besides sundry groups of officers from the fort, who sauntered into the auction room, because they saw such a goodly assemblage of buggies and palkee garees at the door-way, there were several young writers from their studies, who were glad enough to do anything, and be anywhere, rather than endure a tête-à-tête with their Moonshee, or sit in company only with Richardson's folio dictionary and the Bagh-a-buhar. Next there were a few medical gentlemen, who were obliged, for the look of the thing, to be away from home, and who had evidently more leisure time on their hands, than patients on their lists. Then you might see also wandering about with a whip in their grasp, and a straw between

their teeth, a few attachés of the livery stable keepers,—men who attend every horse sale, and who find themselves generally at the other sales also, from very habit and assuetude. Next was a group of college-educated young natives, who, to shew their superior training, sported white cotton stockings and English made shoes. Interspersed here and there were a few whiskered, sickly, and debauched-looking East Indians, their linen habiliments not exactly fresh from the dhobee's hands, and themselves the very pictures of idleness, dissipation, and non-employment. Even the natives of the establishment, and the very coolies of the place seemed to have but poor respect for these specimens of would-be gentility and decayed dandyism, and you might detect the difference, at a single glance, between these, and the neatly-dressed, smug, and really-respectable appearance, of an uncovenanted assistant or two, who had stolen out from the public offices, for a few minute's recreation,

and who looked with very becoming contempt on the idlers and ne'er-do-weels beside them. Again you might observe a slight sprinkling of the pilot establishment with good, honest, well-tanned phizzes, indomitably stiff hair, and sandy red whiskers; carrying in their hands, a few lots of light sundries, which they have picked up for their next trip to the Sandheads at the other auction room within. Captains of country craft, of all measurements build, rig, and metal, were to be seen in abundance; and no wonder, for the *Eliza* was a well known ship, an admirable sailer, and carried nearly fifteen hundred bags beyond her register. Her sale by outcry was an event among them. Her present captain and chief owner, Dennis Blowhard, was a man as well known at the port as the Master Attendant or Governor General himself. While it was given out as a fresh proof of Dennis Blowhard's most excellent acquaintance with which way the wind blew, that he had

suddenly thrown the *Eliza* in the market, at the very moment when freights were fast rising, and all was bustle, and stirring enterprise in the commercial community, after the recent overland tidings of the equalization of sugar duties.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed the auctioneer, in a rich, ringing, trumpet-toned voice, "the business of to-day's sale is well known to all present."

"Silence there!" exclaimed half a dozen voices, to the people in the rear.

The auctioneer, however, had no help for it, but to raise the pitch of his own Stentorian pipes,—and he was soon heard above the din of the auction room, and would have been heard had the roarings of Niagara itself interposed to obstruct him.

"Gentlemen," announced he, "I have to bring to your notice, the good teak ship *Eliza*, built at the Howrah dock, only five years ago; with all her sails, standing rigging, spare suits of sails, and finding

generally, as described in the catalogue; and as now lying off Colvin's Ghaut. Gentlemen, it is unnecessary to describe further the *Eliza*, she is well known to all of you. Will any gentlemen favor me with a bid, —any thing to begin?

The late hubbub had subsided. All was still around the auctioneer, but no one seemed inclined to commence with an offer.

"Come put her up;" said the auctioneer to the sleek-looking deputy at his right hand, and who was standing meekly in the same box with himself, bearing in hand the usual masonic implement of good fellowship, a wooden hammer.

"Eighty thousand rupees!—Eighty thousand rupees, for the ship *Eliza!* Eighty thousand, seventy-five thousand"—sang forth the deputy in his usual classic monotony; the nasal harmony of which, in the time of the Athenians, would doubtless have been eulogized as the true *Nomic melody*, and in the latter days of Quintilian, as the

veritable *cantus obscurior* of antique oratory. "Seventy-five thousand rupees! sixty-five, fifty-five," continued the man in the same nasal and chromatic descents, and the very same *junctura et numerus* of modulation and harmony.

"What! no one bid just for a beginning?" interposed the auctioner, "I'll turn ship-owner myself, rather than allow such a stigma on the Calcutta community as not a single bid for the *Eliza!* Gentlemen, I'm astonished at you!" "Fifty-five thousand rupees," faltered forth an uncertain, tremulous voice, from some individual, probably a boy of old Blowhard's, screening away his blushes from public perception in the back ground.

"Thank you, sir, thank you kindly, sir," cried the auctioneer. Fifty thousand, gentlemen, positively bid!" and he went on reiterating the sum, as if interminably; descanting on the value of the lot, and exhausting all his auction wit, and volubility,

and powers of amplification, in crying up the notorious amiabilities of the *Eliza*. But never was there so dull an outcry. The place was stuffed to suffocation; hardly room for the moving of captain Blowhard's little hand punkah, which was most piteously needed by the poor man, he being exactly seventeen stone five pounds, without taking into consideration his present anxious plight and position. Several eyes were directed towards him to see how he bore the ill success of the sale. He did certainly look very hot and uncomfortable; but there was no help for it: no one would bid more! "Going, going, going!"—sing-songed the deputy.

"It's very surprising," observed the auctioneer.

"Going, going, going!" still drawled out the deputy.

"We must knock it down," said the auctioneer.

"Going, going, going, go—i—n—g!"

"Fifty-five thousand one hundred!" jerked

out the hitherto well-repressed anxiety to bid of Captain Dobbs.

"Much obliged to you, Captain Dobbs," exclaimed the auctioneer with an encouraging—"will no one follow this good example?" Again the same scene as before was acted over—the same changes were rung on the going, go—i—n—g! of the automaton deputy. At last, all patience was exhausted, and the momentous hammer was on the eve of descending, when the bluff gentleman, in the dingy blue coat, whom we have before described, watched as it were the very nick of time, and came opportunely to the rescue, with a new bid of three or four hundred rupees in advance.

All eyes were directed to him, but the stranger stood imperturbably grave and serious; and his quiet gaze sunk not under the enquiring eye of every soul around him? The bid had perfectly staggered poor Captain Dobbs, who remained mute and abashed under it for full three minutes, nor

ventured he to put forth another interposition of a hundred more, until he saw the stranger's new bid almost running away with the prize from his very grasp. He then mustered courage for another attempt, but it was a single hundred however; and his antagonist as instantly swamped it by trolling out a full additional thousand at once!

"It's passing strange," said Captain Dobbs to his friend Captain Terence O'Niel, "the man seems determined to have her!"

"Pooh—he can't go much more;' said his companion. "You're backed by Snooks Simpkins, and Brown, don't be afeard, give him out a little more cable,—he'll soon bring up!"

Away went Captain Dobbs bidding on. Away went the stranger with a counter bid to every advance of the country captain. Hundreds only were soon dispensed with; five hundreds began to be flung on as thick as black fellows, or as soldiers on the lee waste of a crowded transport.

"Well done, Captain Blowhard! if they haven't run it up to eighty thousand!" said a friend to the now happy chief owner of the *Eliza*. But the skipper heard him not,—his mind was rapturously carried away in a luscious dream which the very sound—the very breath and tinkling of eighty thousand rupees had conjured up before him. There was a snug domicile at Howrah in bright vision dancing before him in imagination,—a profitable share in the neighbouring Dock-yard!—an entire immunity from all sea going!—and, above all a certain black-eyed spinster converted by the alchymical operation of the eighty thousand into the dear, dear, doating Mrs. Blowhard. But what did he soon hear! Surely his senses deceive him! The bidding was still advancing—"eighty-one thousand, eighty-three—five—seven—ninety thousand rupees!"

"Oh, down with it, auctioneer!" he had almost shouted out, but he looked it to the pulpit as plainly as eyes could speak the

mandate; and down went the hammer at 90,000 rupees for the good ship *Eliza*, to the bluff-looking gentleman in the dingy blue coat.

All up to this moment had been breathless and stilly silence elsewhere in the auction room—not a word except the angry and conflicting biddings of Captain Dobbs, and his mysterious antagonist. But now was heard the busy buzz of wonder, and admiration and congratulations. "The shipping interest looking up!" "Things certainly on the mend." "Trade improving!" Captain Blowhard was almost pulled to pieces by the hearty shakes of the hand from his sea friends, and which he received by dozens also from his smiling neighbours on every side. At length however, by degrees the glad voices began to give away to the growing murmurings and enquiries which commenced to run round the auction room —and at last was heard from the pulpit itself the odd exclamation by the auctioneer

of "why, where's the gentleman who bid last?"

Suddenly every one seemed to be asking the very same question, and eyes were looking about in all directions.

"Where's the gentleman who bid last?" repeated the auctioneer.

He might well ask, but no one there could tell him. The bluff-looking gentleman had embraced the opportunity of the buzz and first bustle after the knocking down of the lot to him, to——walk leisurely away and quietly decamp, without beat of drum from the auction room! And up to this time neither Captain Blowhard, nor Captain Dobbs, nor Captain Terence O'Niel, nor a soul of that crowded assemblage of human beings could guess whither the mysterious purchaser had betaken himself.

After a melancholy pause, and no little discussion, the lot was again put up, amid many a muttered curse at the gentleman of the blue coat. But Captain Dobbs had had

enough of it. He would not bid a stiver this time; and the *Eliza* was finally doomed to be bought in! Sad to relate, she may now be seen advertised, ay, probably, this very day, in the *Exchange Gazettee*, bound to the Mauritius, whither she is sent as a melancholy *pis-aller* with a freight of rice and coolies, and still under the command of the ill-used, disappointed, and inconsolable Captain Blowhard.

I do not admire making mischief, but report *does* say, and every one knows report is very mischievous, that the bluff-looking gentleman in the blue coat was no other than Lieutenant B——, of the —— native infantry, now at Barrackpore, who, with three or four of his subaltern companions, was at a loss for a morning's amusement: and so they agreed upon a piece of sky, and metamorphosing honest Jack B—— into a quasi-country skipper, he was deputed to the auction for the very innocent purpose of 'going it,' for the good ship *Eliza!*

AN OLD CIVILIAN.

I love every thing that is old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, and old wine.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER.

IT is with no slight pleasure that I introduce to my readers a very grave communication from my worthy contemporary or rather Senior, Mr. Hardcastle, of the Bengal Civil Service, who is now at the presidency, in doubt whether he shall take advantage in his tour of the benefit of the Civil Service Annuity Fund; though, as he seems determined to go home, we may probably hear, in a few days, of his also accepting the annuity, with the gentlemen, whose names have been announced in the Calcutta papers. Since his arrival in Calcutta, he

has amused himself by addressing his old friend, the BENGALEE; and sincerely am I obliged to him for this recollection of me, as well as for the communication of his ever valuable, however antiquated opinions.

Mr. Hardcastle is entirely of the old school; a living semblance of the portraits of former days, when Zophini, the late venerable and able Home, and other artists, whose names I have unfortunately forgotten, used to delight their friends, and patrons, with the faithful representation of ancient Bengaleeism. So little changed is Mr. Hardcastle in habits, mode of life, or even prejudices, now hallowed by their age, that the younger hands of his service have wickedly conferred on him the appellation of "Old Century," and describe him as the "permanent settlement of ninety-five." He yet preserves the good old Indian predilection for short inexpressibles, and long Cossimbazar stockings; and his lengthy white jacket still folds amply around his

hips, and general portliness, somewhat after the style of a false verandah to a bungalow. His hair, of which, it must be confessed, there are but few locks remaining, is carefully dressed and powdered every morning, and the pigtail re-tied by his own house-barber, who even in these degenerate times, ranks far higher than most in his domestic establishment, being second only, in monthly pay and consequence, to the aged and portly Khansumaun. In his opinions and obstinate hatred of all innovation, he is exactly in India, what John Bull, in the country and landed interest at home, still exemplifies in England. There is one difference perhaps,—the Mofussil leisure, the loneliness and frequent dearth of employment with the Civilian, have forced him into a habit of extensive reading. Thus, unlike the elder John Bull, who will neither read nor listen, he is acquainted with all the principles of the new school of Philosophy, and his knowledge has kept

pace, as it were, with the present grand "*March of Intellect.*" But like the Mahratta Cavalry, Mr. Hardcastle hangs upon the march only to discover the weak points of his enemy; and woe to the newfangled movements and tinsel-covered troops of the philosophers, when he once essays a charge on the shallowness of their advancing lines. Had he been in England, the late Duke of York's speech on the Catholic question would have been framed by him in letters of burnished gold; and I do not think that Lord Brougham, or O'Connel himself, could be more heartily abhorred by him, than the late *liberal* measure of a few of the Ministers. To complete his character, like many of his standing, though somewhat petulant and haughty, and exclusive he is as warm-hearted, and honourable a man as any in existence; a very Chesterfield frequently in outward demeanour; and, although ever opposed to *liberals*, as famed for sterling liberality, as the highest in the service.

But my readers must be impatient for the old gentleman himself—so, without farther preface, I hasten to produce his most esteemed letter to the BENGALEE:

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Forty-odd years have flown over my head, since I was first set down in India, a Writer on the Honourable Company's Bengal Establishment. I am at length packing up for the land of my birth; and in leaving the country, where my habits have been formed, and, I may say, my opinions imbibed, such as they are, on the great subjects of humanity, I have been led naturally enough to take a last and parting look at it. The silent and gloomy tombs, that rise in monumental splendour in the environs of Calcutta, contain the remains of not a few, who were endeared to me by the associations of early friendship; of *one*, who was knit to me by still nearer and dearer ties; and of more than one, to whom I once trusted the transmission of a name

and memory, which must now, I fear, perish with myself. The living, for some time past, have scarcely presented to me one whom I have found worthy to supply the place of the dead, as a friend and a companion; indeed, my residence in the Mofussil has separated me from the great herding-place of my countrymen; and the changes in the service, to which I belong, have precluded me from cultivating an acquaintance with any one, sufficient, with a man of my habits, to ripen into friendship. Books have been my chief delight, and my most efficacious solace during my exile. These I have received regularly from England from a literary friend, to whose taste and judgment I entrusted the selection of my intellectual food. He has kept me supplied liberally with the most popular, and according to his estimate of the effusions of the English press, the most useful works of the age. My library has accumulated around me, and my leisure

has allowed me to cultivate a personal, if not a very close, acquaintance with all it's inhabitants. Visitors, when they used to see it, called it a '*Circulating* Library,' from the evident marks of perusal, which it's various volumes displayed. It may have been termed so properly enough, if each, coming in it's place and it's turns, to be read, according to the system of study, that I laid down from the beginning of my life in India, and have steadily pursued, can be called 'circulation.'

"Beyond my own hands, however, my library has been but little thumbed. The Civilian and the Soldier, who have made, as many have, a resting place of my house, occasionally robbed a shelf of a volume, with which to beguile a hot and sultry hour in the forenoon: but both the reader and the volume, I have regularly remarked, have soon slept, side by side, on the same couch. With those, who did me the honor of making my home 'a half-way-house' to

the Upper Provinces, I uniformly found, that my cellar, which was also well-stocked, was an object of greater study and delight, than my library; and that a taste in wine was far more universal than a taste in books. In the earlier part of my residence, this taste was still stronger than it is now; and liberal potations, in honour of the 'best in India,' were certainly more in vogue, in 1806, than at present. So far times have changed, even in India, for the better, that men *drink* less, and *read* more, than they did. If, however, I am to judge from the aspect of society, as I now find it, on the eve of my departure from the East, compared with what it was when India could first rank me among it's *Sahib logue*, there has been no improvement in either the character, the conduct, or the consequence and opinion, entertained of Europeans. There has been a most visible falling off from the high ground on which the conquerors of Hindoostan formerly

stood. I remember the day, when, on an Englishman passing in his palanquin, every native, of whatever rank, paid him the compliment to come out of his, and make his salaam. Now-a-days, Sir, a native of the lowest caste will, in Calcutta at least, rub elbows with a Member of Council! Since I arrived here, measures have been also in agitation, which, in my younger days, never would have been dreamt of. It was then a received opinion, that the *wisdom* and *power* of authority could not be publicly called in question, without the estimation, in which every Englishman stood in the country, being brought down in the eyes of the Natives. Now it is not only openly resisted, but the Natives are called on, to lead and to lend their aid, in withstanding it! Be assured, Sir, from one, who has been long on habits of the closest acquaintance with the Native character, that such amalgamation, as we have lately seen,

is madness itself; it is absolute suicide.* No native, however high his rank, ought to approach within a yard of an Englishman: and every time an Englishman shakes hands with a Baboo, he shakes the basis on which our ascendency in this country stands. Two such meetings, as I have lately seen, would do more to subvert our power, than two Burmese wars, in which we should chance to be unsuccessful. From them, and their evil effects, we may expect to recover; but when the English Merchants sit down, and hob-nob with the Bengalee Sircars; and when the Gomastahs of the Burra Bazar are found seconding the resolutions of the Barristers of the Supreme Court, then depend upon it you are playing the game of your enemies. You are losing the 'vantage ground, on which you have all along stood;

* Absurd as this must appear now—such were the grave and cherished opinions of many of the old School!! The BENGALEE.

and this ground, once lost, cannot be regained.—Don't speak to me of the change of times, the progress of opinion, and the march of intellect. Why hasten, by your own folly, the event which these changes must one day bring about? Why teach the Natives of India, in a course of lectures, to which at present you almost drag them by force, that you are no more their superiors in political rank, and privileges, that you are in numerical strength? They are themselves astounded at your folly. They will not be driven so fast, as you would drive them, to the point, from which they are to achieve the expulsion of their conquerors; and it is some consolation to reflect, that when you do get them to take so fearful a step, as to congregate for the purposes of opposition to all which they have hitherto been taught to respect, they are frightened at their own doings, and are not found to stand so faithful as their teachers anticipated, or so ready as they thought they had made

them, to take another and a still bolder step. You speak to them of a Free Press, and they wonder what you mean; you tell them of the rights of British subject; and the only comprehensible commentary you can give them on this text resolves itself into a lesson of disaffection to the British power and authority! Such are they taught, and such they have always been; and, if we look alone at the permanence of our power in this country, such let us hope they will long be. But who are the teachers? It gives me pleasure to acquit the elders of the service, to which I belong, of any thing so truly absurd as is indicated by this conduct towards the Native population of India: and I believe in no stock departments of the Honourable Company's administration are there found half a dozen of men so lost alike to what they owe to their employers, to themselves, and the people, in whose government they share, as to become the preachers of doctrines so utterly to be

deprecated by every Englishman, who knows his country's honour and his country's interests. The leaders in this Crusade of danger to our Empire are those who have nothing to lose amidst the general wreck, to which it would inevitably conduct,—a race that has multiplied, though not yet very extensively, since the opening of the free trade. They are the only promoters of measures, of which they either see not or care not for the issue. For I must do the older mercantile residents in India before the large failures the justice to say, that I found them as hostile to *radical* measures, as they are termed,—for want, perhaps, of a better denomination,—as the gentlemen in the services: and under their late advice, and with their example before them, I have no great fear that the rising generation of Agents and Merchants will enlist under the banners of an ignorant and mad reform, raised by some democratical barrister, or some 'broken down' aspirant after a

subsistence in more humble occupations, turned instructor of the world, and reformer of it's errors, through the medium of—a *Calcutta Newspaper!* Why then, you may ask, am I so indignant, when those, on whom my wrath descends, are so insignificant? I am an old man, and perhaps peevish: I have lived, all my days, where no such mad affronts assailed my understanding as are now daily put upon it by the *Calcutta Press!* and as I have no patience with such fools as pester society with their nonsense, I have no rest until I find a vent for the feelings of contempt I entertain for them, I am also not without my hopes, that, through the Press itself, I may contribute my mite to correct the evils arising out of it. I am told that the day of radical absurdity here is on the deline; and I am glad to hear it. To me it appears to have lately attempted a step in advance, and been too much countenanced, where it ought to have met a very different

reception. But, perhaps, it was the dying struggle, indicating a vigour which was not possessed, and the forerunner of a fate, to which every true friend of England and of India will pray, that *Radicalism in the East* may speedily be consigned.

Your's sincerely,

"S. HARDCASTLE."

THE HALF HOUR.—A RUN AGAINST TIME.

Delicious kiss,
Why thou so suddenly art gone,
Lost in the moment thou art won?

DR. WALCOTT.

IT was the good fortune of my friend Harry Seymour, a lieutenant of the Bengal Native Infantry, to visit home on a year's leave, on private affairs, much earlier than the furlough regulations in his case would have permitted the indulgence. He was an honest, good-tempered, soft-hearted, harum-scarum, happy sort of youngster at all times: and leaving India, as he then was enabled to do, in good health, and in the hey-day of life, we all knew he would enjoy himself in England. He visited his native country at a time when his heart

was capable of appreciating and fondly relishing the many good things it holds out to a returned exile. He had not out-lived his early feelings; with him the ties of boyhood, the enjoyments of youth, the charms of local recollections, the thrillings themselves of early loves, likings, and liaisons, had not all withered and passed away. In a word, he could then enter into, and understand the real difference between this hotbed of Hindooism, and the sturdier, healthier, and hardier enjoyments of his unforgotten birth-place. His country was yet his *home*, which is more than many of us can now say—and more than half the Indians, who have lingered on in the Company's dominions beyond a quarter of a century, could venture to assert.

One of the greatest misfortunes that happens to us after a too protracted residence in the East, is that we are not only unfitted to face the keen breezes of a colder climate, but we are actually unsuited

to appreciate the social worth and sterling recommendations of our own country. What is still worse, the unfitness proceeds mainly from the impaired tone of our mental, intellectual, and moral feelings, as well as of our bodily capacities. But I am wandering from our topic—which is, not to day, to recommend an early retirement from India, ere the heart is sunk in cold, selfish, sensual indifference and apathy,—though I may illustrate this matter also on a future occasion,—my object at present as any thing but a serious disquisition; and in spite of all this preparatory sermonizing, I have simply to state that Harry Seymour was *young* when he returned, a few years ago, to his native country. My readers may possibly observe that I need not have put myself to so much pains in stating this—for the followiug little history of 'half an hour' could not fail abundantly to attest the fact of our hero's youth.—But, to our tale.

After a tedious voyage of more than

seven weeks from St. Helena—the Western Isles were passed—the pilot came on board —the Lizard lights were sighted on the larboard beam, and my friend Seymour determined to get on shore by the earliest practicable opportunity. 'Tis a season of such wild excitement on board an homeward Indiaman, when just entering the channel, that no wonder five of the passengers, with more loose gold than good sense among them, soon fell into the designs of a knowing personage of a boatman who came with the pilot: they agreed to pay him thirty-five guineas to put them forthwith on shore at Falmouth. In vain the good captain assured them they would be out all night; and that if they would quietly remain in their own snug accommodations until the following morning he would land them, with the present wind, at the Isle of Wight, or on the coast of Sussex, or safely from the Downs: they were obstinately bent upon the boating adventure,

and the boat soon scudded away, with its freight, amid the cheers of the ship's crew. Fortunately the weather was moderate, and though they were out, as prognosticated, till long after midnight, they were at length securely landed at Falmouth, without further inconvenience than suffering from the intensity of the cold at that winter season of the year. Three of their number were lucky enough to secure places in the next day's coach for London—and in due time away they started: our hero Harry Seymour one of the party.

Whether it was the feverish excitement altogether of his new situation on shore; whether it was his exposure of the preceding night;—or whether it was his being thus suddenly thrown into the somewhat of late unpractised position of a mail-coach traveller, with his back moreover to the horses,—I am unable to say;—but certain it was, that the gay lieutenant soon found himself rather qualmish, and very far from

comfortable. There was a crabbed old Cornish Attorney in the seat before him, travelling to town, with a carpet bag and tin case of title deeds, to put into the hands of conveyancers there, for the purpose of enabling some luckless client to raise the wind, and ruin himself in a new mining speculation. Whether the consciousness of his unheavenly errand soured his temper, and unsuited him for the enjoyment of

'Heaven's own breezy air,'

it matters not:—but the crusty old limb of the law would insist upon having the window next them hermetically sealed the whole night. The lieutenant lowered it gently for a few moments, when he thought the lawyer was asleep; but the man started up with a shuddering growl, and asked, if my friend intended to 'perish him!'—Poor Seymour was half suffocated, therefore, in spite of the bitterness of the universal cold

around them; but towards morning he fell into a kind of rumbling, jarring, shaking, unsteady, stage-coach description of slumber;—nodding one moment right over into the solicitor's lap, and the next making an unceremonious pillow of the shoulder of his right hand companion! When he woke it was nearly broad day;—his feverish sensations had subsided, but he was to endure a new misery in their stead;—the cold had become intolerable. Never did poor mortal suffer as he did: and never was hungry and chilly traveller more happy than our friend when they stopt for breakfast, and he was enabled not only to get some hot rolls, toast, and tea, but what he considered second only to these essentials—to wit, the snatching a few hasty minutes for a hurried and very desirable adjustment of his toilet.—I am obliged, as will be evident to all refined and gentle readers, to introduce the record of this little portion of the detail—

in consequence of the adventure we are now approaching with our hero;—who, be it stated, was a bit of a beau, at all times.

Away they started again—but the traveller was soon as qualmish and ill as ever, and had still farther to bear the misery and inconsistency of bitter cold, amid his old sensation of suffocating confinement and closeness. And thus they journeyed on, with very little relief, till they began to approach, at about 2 o'clock in the day, the appointed station for dining. Seymour now resolutely determined to eschew the next meal altogether; and as he had learned from experience in his Indian sojourning, that when tripping it by dâk in the hot winds, the wisest and healthiest plan was an abstinence from all substantial edibles, he sagaciously conceived that the same reasoning would apply to the case of mail coach travelling in his own country, even amid the intensity of its pinching cold. And right cold it was, for while they were nearing the

house, the noontide air became fresher, and keener, and more chilling than ever. Perhaps in the whole history of hard winters, it would be difficult to select a more biting and bitter frost, than that which beset our Indians in this their renewed introduction to their native climate. The breath was frozen fast on the small panes of glass of the coach;—and the coachman's whiskers had long pending icicles and spangles of glistering frost on them, when the coach drew up at Bridport for dinner, and coachee descended to tell them they were to be allowed half an hour only for the meal. 'Half an hour—gemmen—if you please'—he authoritatively repeated 'not a moment longer!'

Away tumbled in the bevy of shivering, and chattering, and hungry passengers;—but the suddenly abstemious Harry Seymour resolutely enquired for a spare room with a fire; and was shewn into the private inn parlour, or inner tap,—the only place they

could give him with a fire ready lighted. He limped along into the apartment as well as his half frost-bitten feet would allow him, amid the still reiterated warnings of the coachman, and of one or two busy helpers who were taking off the horses, singing out "only half an hour, genil'men, if you please!"

The room was empty. He threw off a boat cloak, and a Delhi shawl scarf from around his throat, and then commenced to swing and beat about his arms, and dance his feet, to put a little life and blood in them, before he approached too near to the wished for haven of the fire. At this critical moment of his most energetic antics, there suddenly entered the apartment, bearing a silver old-fashioned saucepan in her hand, as beautiful a sylph-like figure of a young and smiling Hebe as ever popt mal-apropos into a room to catch a poor fellow, in his supposed solitude, making a fool of himself;—or to make a sadder fool of him

afterwards with the aid and assistance of her own witching smiles and irresistible attractions. She stopt herself for a moment, suppressed her evident inclination to laugh outright, primmed up her little mischief-breathing mouth, and then quietly begged his pardon, and said, that she only came "to warm her uncle's daily posset." Immediately she placed the silver saucepan on the fire, busied herself in stirring the coals, with other means and appliances for the acceleration of her little task.

"Only half an hour allowed, gentlemen!" still repeated some officious voices in the passage without. Seymour looked up at a Dutch clock in the corner of the room; five minutes of the thirty assigned him had already elapsed. He turned quickly, and gazed and gazed again, as if to make the most of the brief moments in his possession, and revel while permitted in hurried admiration of the loveliest thing he had ever lived to look upon. Her admirable

petite figure and graceful form absolutely bewitched him. There was a grace and prettiness in her every movement; a tidiness and simplicity in her whole appearance, so unlike any thing he had beheld for years—or indeed had ever beheld—that he kept on admiring her, in such lengthened and unrestrained delight, that it was well her own fortunately averted looks did not meet his, or they would have sunk in maiden wonderment or affright beneath his warm and unremitted gazing. Her coiffeur was prettiness itself:—she had on a tiny cap, much in the fashion, it struck him, of an upper barmaid, and more, it may be in the still better style of *niece de Maison*. Then there were three or four silken ringlets falling from within the lace frilling of her cap. And her shape too—set off as it was by the neatest of all possible chintz frocks with a broidered and fancifully worked little silk apron. "What a lovely

specimen of my country's fair productions!" he exclaimed to himself. "I must speak to her," he mentally continued:—"but I have not a moment to lose!"

His eye had again glanced at the old-fashioned clock in the corner, and it told him he had expended five foolish minutes in his first simple enchantment and admiration. He had but twenty minutes now before him.

"My dear——Madam—Miss——" he stammered out ——, "for whom did you say that warm cordial was intended?"

"For my uncle, Sir," she replied.

"You seem very, very careful about it," he remarked.

"'Tis for my dear good uncle, Sir—— and I wish to make it as it ought to be."

"And who is your good uncle, my pretty maid?" the lieutenant enquired.

With a smile at his improving address and with her lips wearing the same Hebe-

like expression which they exhibited when she beheld his antics at her first entrance, she replied, "My pretty maid's uncle, keeps this inn, Sir."

"Can I assist you in your office, with the saucepan?" he asked—"and then perhaps you will reward me with a little of the contents."

"Thank you kindly," was her artless and immediate reply, "will you hold the handle thus—while I bring the spices?"

She placed the saucepan in his hand, and guided his somewhat awkward, yet now fast warming fingers with her tiny tapering ones, till the touch thrilled and tingled through him like wild fire. Then she tripped away as if utterly unconscious of all the mischief she had been innocently inflicting upon the peace and susceptibility of her new acquaintance.

My friend followed her with a look of speaking bewilderment; but his glance in

its career fell also upon the dial plate of the eternally ticking, and advancing Dutch clock. Full three more minutes had fled! How the inamorato cursed the unceasing pendulum of that unpitying chronicle of time, and breathed his bitter anathema against the seven leagued strides of its gawky, ugly, long minute hand, And then how utterly his wishes contrasted with those of the lover who prayed

'Ye Gods! annihilate both time and space!'

But the object of his thoughts soon came bounding back with her spice box; cast a few into the silver saucepan, stirred the savory and scented contents, and then, as all was going right, the young pair had clearly established by this time a very legitimate acquaintance with each other, and she suffered him to lead her by her scarcely retiring hand, to a small mahogany bench or settee by the fire side.

"And what are you in this establishment Miss ———, I beg your pardon may I ask —your name?"

"Oh, do not call me Miss, Sir, I am nothing but Mary, simply Mary, my uncle's niece: my aunt is busy looking after the passengers by the mail, and—"

"Hang the mail!" muttered to himself the young man, and again the Dutch remembrancer before him exhibited the flight of a couple more minutes. "Only a poor quarter remaining!" he murmured. "And your uncle, Mary"—he said aloud.

"My uncle, Sir," she replied half timidly receding from an approaching arm,—which I am sure it would have puzzled my friend Harry Seymour to tell how, or why, was beginning to steal somewhat tenderly, though hesitatingly around the little waist of the maiden.

"My uncle," repeated Mary, withdrawing herself, "is suffering from age and

rheumatism, and I am here to nurse and attend him."

"I thought you had been the pretty bar-maid, Mary."

"No, no, not that," she said smiling, "my own poor mother would not permit her Mary to be so employed, even at my uncle's inn."

By this time her hand, which he had again taken, was resting timidly, yet half permissively on his. They both sat silent, watching, it may be, the very interesting object of the simmering saucepan before them; but they said nothing and were both looking, I must confess, exceedingly silly. He seemed to be secretly *inspiriting* himself to say something to the dear discovered gem of seeming innocence and artlessness at his side: yet his hardiest efforts were unavailing, and like a simpleton, his silence would have outlasted the half hour itself—but that the dull tick of the prosaic Dutch clock

roused him from his dream, and told him that five farther minutes had dwindled away from the poor balance of the remaining portion of his time.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "only ten minutes more!"

"Are you going away in the mail?" she enquired.

"Yes,—Mary,—but ——."

There was another pause—yet by this time not only did her hand lay altogether passive in one of his, but his other arm had sunk unconsciously from the upright back of the old mahogany settee, and was very nearly, if not quite, in the enjoyment of a resting place 'all unrepressed and unreproved' around the waist of his now perhaps too confiding companion.

"Heigho!" said a deep sigh of the Bengal lieutenant of native infantry.

"Heigho!" whispered a scarcely audible one of the gentle maiden by his side.

"The half hour's nearly out!" grunted a gruff voice in the outer passage.

They both started up, with one accord, their eyes fixed upon the clock; six or seven still further minutes had there fled away into the lap of eternity.

"What a shame!" exclaimed the youngster, "to be snatched away when just taught to——."

"Nay, Sir, you'll soon forget the little inn at Bridport."

"Never—Mary—I fear we never——;" our hero, as befitting him, was getting high up in the heroics.—He turned around—the shawl that had been wrapt about his neck—for the sake of landing it—(for a favorite sister too, I am ashamed to avow) now caught his eye—as, possibly, it had Mary's some little time before.

He took it up, and throwing it round her miniature person "will you wear this, Mary, for my sake—for the sake of——?"

She blushed crimson deep as the shawl itself, and gently attempted to remove it. There was necessarily a slight, faint struggle ;—they are brought closer by it—closer—and still unconsciously much nearer together—till their lips ——.

"The half hour's out !"—sung forth savagely a loud voice, the unwelcome owner of it, popping himself into the room at the same moment. "The half hour gentlemen," reiterated half a score of tongues in every direction. "Coach up !—all ready !"

"Well—well—I'll follow you immediately," muttered the miserable and disappointed lieutenant. "Plague on their impertinence," he continued. But all again was for a moment clear, and turning to his companion—.

"My dear—dear girl,"—he hurriedly murmured—and again—somehow—I am sure I can't say how—their lips—.

"Oh—heavens !—heavens !" screamed poor Mary, "There's the posset all over—all

flaring over in the grate—what shall I do? what shall I do? The chimney will be on fire!"

"Coach quite ready, Sir,—waiting for you!"—said the landlady herself approaching: "why! what's all this?"—she shrieked out as she entered! The lieutenant huddled on his boat cloak; he attempted one tender parting look, but it was in vain! In one moment more, he was in the coach itself, and the crabbed Cornish attorney and his tin case of title deeds in the back seat before him!—Oh that too fleeting half hour—Harry Seymour often, often dreams of it, he tells me to this very day!

THE DURBAR.

And, like this insubstantial pageant, faded!
SHAKSPEARE.

It was my fortune, some time ago, to be present at a Durbar at the Government house; and, notwithstanding it was conducted with all wonted etiquette, and propriety, yet, as every thing connected with Eastern ceremony presents itself to the imagination only in the semblance of expensive show and magnificence, for which alone I had foolishly prepared myself,—I returned from the spectacle, more than ordinarily disappointed. There were circumstances, also, which gave rise to feelings I had little anticipated. As far as regards the splendour

of the exhibition,—with the exception of the Body Guard in it's full dragoon dress, and military equipments, and a company of grenadiers, from the regiment in the fort, there was nothing peculiar or imposing, and certainly nothing of Asiatic character or magnifience in the scene. Among the whole assemblage, the only richly-dressed performers in the spectacle were the aides-de-camp, and a few of the staff; and there was as little of the east in their style of equipment, as could well be imagined; if we except the Persian or costly Hindoostanee sabres, worn by some of them, and which, I am not aware, were expressly adopted for the occasion.

The European gentlemen, Civilians, and others, who attended, were collected beforehand, in the entrance to the Marble Hall; and on the Governor-General making his appearance, he was received with all honour, by the grenadier company and Body Guard, the latter of which were ranged in standing

files, along the northern windows of the extensive vestibule, or anti-room. As his Lordship reached the centre door of the hall of audience, preceded by his personal staff and secretaries, and accompanied by the members of Government, the military officers and visitors following in the rear,—the whole of the native gentlemen, who had been previously assembled in the marble hall, stood up,—the Governor-General proceeding through their ranks to the chair of state at the further end, while these descendants of the former nobles and princes of Hindoostan paid their respectful homage to the respresentative and delegate of their foreign rulers.

His Lordship took his seat under the canopy, with his suite, the general staff, and others, ranged semicircularly on either side; and now commenced the ceremony of introduction. The native Ministers, Vakeels, agents for neighbouring states, noblemen, descendants of Nawaubs, of Rajahs, and

others, were brought up, one by one, and their rank, titles, and pretensions, announced by the Persian Secretary. The low salam was given; and the half European bow, and half Asiatic raising of the hand, returned by his Lordship. After the presentation of the whole, Khelauts, and other ornamental dresses, were conferred on a few, and *uttr* and *paun* given indiscriminately to every one: at the conclusion of which, the Governor-General bowed repeatedly to the assembly; and with the same ceremonial and arrangement of the suite and others, his Lordship retired from the hall of audience.

My readers may naturally enquire, why I have thus entered into a description of what must be familiar to half the Calcutta community? But the fact is, the scene fastened upon my mind, with an impression I can little pourtray, and one which, certainly, I shall never forget. It was, by chance, the only Durbar I had ever witnessed in the country,—and the unhappy and

too apparent poverty, the low broken fortunes, and, yet more striking than all, the calm, respectful apathy, the forced contentedness of many of these fallen representatives of ancient sovereignty and power,—came to my heart with a feeling far from pleasurable to myself, and, as it then seemed to me, not very honourable to our own policy, and our own situation in this empire.

And yet I am aware, that the now penniless and exhausted state of their coffers,—the wealth of which once laughed to scorn the proudest possessions of our European aristocracy, must mainly be attributed to their own degeneracy, their own inaction, or profligate extravagance; while other numerous, and even more wealthy families, of their countrymen are fast rising in the scale of importance, and profiting by the mercantile pursuits and commercial intelligence of their conquerors. These last are far surpassing their teachers in the

benefits and riches which such knowledge has opened to their exertions. But still the mind, while it witnessed the remains of the once proud nobility of the East, and felt a humiliating pang at this public record and display of their now lowly degradation,—could not be disposed to recognise as their successors to eastern importance, the head Banians or Shroffs of the Bazar; however respectable some of the latter, or however removed from the habits and general character of the trading community of their brethren.

Among the presentations at the Durbar, was that of an old, infirm, native gentleman, with the vestiges of a tall and remarkably fine person. He was related, I ascertained, to the ancient Moorshedabad family, and subsisted, partly on the relics of a once extensively zumeendaree, which the chicanery of his neighbours, amidst the Zillah courts, had curtailed to it's present scanty insignificance, and partly on a small

pension or monthly stipend from the government. On his feebly approaching the chair of state, I was much struck with his appearance,—the very shape of his turban, —the style of his plain muslin, but amply folded dress,—the faded antiquity of a rich and once handsome shawl, and altogether the *passée*, and now fallen appearance of his fortunes, could not but awaken notice and sympathy. The natives of Hindoostan are ever at home, and unabashed in public ceremonial; and the merest boy will conduct himself with scrupulous observance of etiquette and propriety, on all public occasions like the present. Therefore the elegant, though decrepid manner of the old gentleman, was not so much the subject of my remark: but, as he bent himself in his salutation before the raised seat of power, his strength failed him, and he almost sunk at it's feet. He was immediately supported by a moonshee; or other native attending the Persian Secretary, and the thing passed

off, I believe, unheeded by many. To me, the little incident, though simply accidental, and resulting, perhaps, only from the age and infirmity of the individual, yet seemed a deep and heart-reaching tale; for the idle wandering of my fancy had conveyed me to other times and changes, and placed me amidst happier events for this now lowly scion of princes. My mind pictured him as he might have been, upon the haughty musnud of his ancestors; and then it brought him here again before me, poor, fortuneless, aged, and decrepid,—sinking in shame and sorrow to the dust, as he performed this his last earthly exhibition of submissive and too humbling degradation!

On my return home, the picture of the Durbar kept haunting my imagination; and when, in the evening, I had retired early to rest, before resigning myself to sleep, the circumstances of the day came confusedly and strangely before me. There was the marble hall;—the guards, the tottering and

falling old man, the military band, the presenting of *uttr*,—and when at length I sunk into slumber, the unquiet state of my mind resolved itself into an unaccountable and most unnatural dream!—Years, centuries seemed to have passed away, and yet I was alive and present amidst earthly scenes! I was in Europe, in my native country;—but whether, like Rip Van Winkle, I had overslept myself for this portentous period; or whether, in the Brahminical course of transmigration, I had, meantime, passed into other bodies, and again been doomed to reanimate, for my sins, the unhappy person of the BENGALEE;—yet so it was, I was alive, and still observing every passing event, though ages had flitted over my country, and wrought their fearful and distressing changes upon it.

It's History, indeed, meanwhile, how eventful! Parties and politics had changed sides;—the Whig had merged into the supporter of high Toryism, and the very

names and principles of party had become extinct! But, in their stead, the "March of Intellect" had boldly and majestically advanced; all Middlesex and the surrounding counties, with their laity, labourers, and all were gownsmen, fellows, dignitaries, or honorary members and professors of the London University. The Catholic question had been long since carried, and its politics had for a time toiled only in secret ascendancy; till at last it boldly threw off the mask, and subverted Protestantism, it's Church and government. By this time there were annual Parliaments; and, as an improvement upon universal sufferage, subordinate county senates, and village council boards had been gloriously adapted: new trade and commerce had been opened by the *liberals* to the nation,—agriculture had been gravely and deliberately exploded for ever; while Captain Parry's successors, completing their discoveries at the Pole, had laid open a new world and continent

for enterprising speculation. Gelatia, the discovered country, proved a powerful and wondrous race of people; and the outlet for broad cloths, woollens and manufactures, with the blessings of open and reciprocal trade, had raised the British nation, under it's new most Catholic monarchy, to a pinnacle of unheard-of, unprecedented glory! It was true, there was no army, and the wooden walls of Old England had long since fallen into discredit and disuse,—but the pen of the now intellectual philosophic people was ever brave and prepared, and the public press more omnipotent,—more influential than ever. The Gelatians, however, found out some weak points in our power: their ports were suddenly shut; they declared war at an unhappy moment of intestine public discussion, when half the county parliaments were in open feud with their neighbours. There was no possible mode of new fashioning a navy at this juncture, for we had kindly permitted

other nations, to be our carriers, and had neither mariners nor shipping. Invasion ensued, and a few years saw Britain only in the character of "*one of the brightest jewels of the Crown*" of Gelatia!

Now came my dream:—There was a grand Levee at the former St. James's, and the Gelatian Viceroy was receiving the homage and obeisance of the natives. It was a heart-depressing spectacle. The descendants of our Russells, our Pagets, our Howards, Wellesleys, and others, were attending the Levee in lowly guise, and had been detained in their humble vehicles, opposite the vice-regal palace, by a crowd witnessing the punishment of a culprit, a lineal descendant of one of our once leading Ministers, who had been convicted, by the new laws of our conqueror, of charlatanism, and tricks of sleight of hand! I saw them afterwards in the hall of state, poor, dejected, and despised, while the new rulers, with their furred and splendid habiliments seemed

proudly to hold in scorn the humiliation of their vassals.

The sight overpowered me!—my spirit seemed bursting in it's anger: I tried to think it some delusion of the troubled fancy, and to break away from it's unhallowed influence,—but a huge whiskered and furred Gelatian seemed to watch and oppress me; —at last he rushed fiercely at my breast —— when the "Sahib! Sahib!" of my sirdar bearer most happily aroused, and relieved the BENGALEE from the appalling incubus and horror of the *Night-mare!*

THE MUD FORT.

Each look'd to sun, and stream and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The weather was beginning to be insupportably hot, and canvas anything but agreeable. The face of the Major, commanding the —th Regiment of Native Infantry, was daily growing blacker—literally blacker; much from the effect of exposure to the sun, and from an overflowing of bile, the result of continued neglect to certain warnings and sure tokens of disordered health, which the anxious old soldier was, at this juncture, too busy to attend to. But still much of it arose, too, from the perpetual Erebus-looking frown,

which protracted ill-humour, vexation, and perplexity, now contrived to *fix*, as it were, on his marked and weather-beaten countenance. Woe to the unfortunate wight on the rear-guard who by this time might chance to steal into camp before the last creaking hackery of the baggage-train. It was ten to one if the old Major, who had an eye on every thing, did not stalk forth from his double-poled tent to greet him with something like the following.

"Well, Mr. Crump, were you not officer of the day, yesterday?"

"Yes Major," would reply the innocent.

"And why the devil, Sir, do you come into camp before the rest of the baggage? May I beg the favor of your betaking yourself to your post again; and if you enter this ground before the last hackery, you shall hear a little more on the subject."

"The young dog," would the Major mutter to himself, as he lifted again the cheek of his tent, and retired under shelter

to his hookah—"I have no notion of his creeping in to breakfast, and my beer left to boil on the road-way for these three hours to come!"

It was no wonder, after all, that the Major was a little out of humour.—He had been ordered out, with his whole corps from Benares, just at the end of March; sent away through Azimghur to the Oude territories, and peremptorily desired, long after the hot-winds had set in, to aid his most excellent Lucknow Majesty's aumil, or tuhseelder, or some such respectable native functionary, in enforcing the payment of certain stray lacs of rupees, said to be due by refractory zumeendars to the royal treasury. Now the old Major not only hated being away from his snug well-tattied bungalow near the nullah, at Secrole, at this peculiar season of the year; but he, moreover, detested, as cordially as any officer of sepoys in the whole army, this deputation of himself and regiment, at the beck and

nod of a rascally aumil, to support whole gangs of tax-gathering harpies, and punish poor wretches of zumeendars, who were often roused into rebellion only under the grinding extortion of the court,—men, in fact, who were really honest fine fellows, in thus holding out as long as they could, against not a little of robbery and oppression.

On one or two occasions, in spite of external ill-humour, old Jemmy Costive, or Caustic,—for he was indiscriminately called either, in the usual happy exchange by the juniors of the army of all real patronimics of their seniors for certain more euphonious and approved soubriquets:—in spite of ill humour, I repeat, our good Major had once or twice amicably insured the adjustment of sundry claims, brought forward by the aumil, and induced the landholders to pay something in composition and part clearance of their *kist*. He declared it gave him little pleasure to knock mud walls about the ears

of the injured, by way, too, of redressing their injuries:—but if he could only get the aumil himself into a snug little mud-walled edifice, with a few score of his rascally followers and rabble of military about him, he would shew him a little ball-practice, with an episode, *par parenthese*, of assault and escalade; and he would vouch for it, "his Lucknow Majesty's aumil would never bring out another Company's regiment a tax-gathering again in the hot winds!"

It was, however, growing near the middle of the month of May, and old Caustic's patience was nearly expended,—such a dance had the aumil led him—when, after a long day's, or rather night's march, on approaching one of the circuitous wanderings of the river Gograh, so peculiar to that part of the country, the detachment at length came upon a regular mud fort, not very far from the river itself. The aumil here had a long account of revenue to settle with the killedar, who was a powerful proprietor of

the surrounding country, and a determined and constant defaulter to his liege lord of Lucknow. But it happened also, very oddly, that our good Major had a little bit of an account of his own to settle with him. Strange to say, some of the Major's pale ale, or other such valuables (we have already seen the care he bestowed on these things) had been seized on the river at this very mud fort, a few years ago, when the regiment was stationed in the north of Oude, and Major Caustic expected, viâ the Gograh, his annual supply of rich edibles, &c. from the esteemed hand of Mr. Havell, of Diggah. He was anxiously awaiting their arrival, when he learned that the very identical zumeendar, who now had the honor to be opposed to him, had seized the entire cargo, and, what was far worse, had recklessly destroyed the same, the moment he found out the hams, wines, condiments, and other contaminations contained in the various packages of his plunder. This was

a never-to-be-forgotten offence in the list of the Major's worldly sufferings and indignities.

But the offender was at length before him —within his very grasp,—at this juncture too, of accumulated ill-humour, collected bile, and burning-like annoyance! Moreover, it really appeared there was, in this case, some good cause of complaint on the part of the Lucknow authorities: the man was a professed rebel and marauder. So the Major very conscientiously mingled together his public and private sense of injuries. There were before him, in the fevered judgment-hall of his feelings, (the thermometer at exactly 104° Farht.) first of all, his old grievances, next his present exposure in the hot winds, then his military zeal, and, finally, his aspirations after a C-B-ship—all exciting him into a virtuous indignation against the luckless killedar. Hence arose a tolerably decided and satisfactorily founded resolution in his own mind

to batter the mud walls about the devoted heads of the rebel, and, as he called them, his pestilent little garrison.

He sent a summons immediately, in which as much of the above as was necessary to announce, was rendered into very passable Persian, by the aid of the aumil and the young interpreter and quarter-master of the regiment. But the reply must have been anything but soothing or satisfactory; for the whole of that morning the Major was shut up in his tent, with the Adjutant and Interpreter just mentioned. All in the camp began pretty well to understand that the fort now before them was to be carried forthwith; and it was further whispered that the Major was determined to make a spirited example of this chieftain, in order to intimidate others, and lessen the chance of his being much longer detained out on this most detestable duty.

Towards the evening of the eventful day just described, a group of European officers

were observed clustered together and lounging about in front of the tents of our little detachment. The fort was within half a mile of them, rising conspicuously and menacingly somewhat to their left. Immediately in front was a bold ravine, which commenced close to the extreme left of their line of encampment, and then ran brokenly on before it, till it reached the eastern face of the fort, passing close to the base of the wall itself, and forming a deep ditch and defence along that side of the little fortification. On quitting the fort; the ravine went off directly to the river,—the river itself at this point slanting inwards in a north-westerly direction, so as to run almost close to the north or rear of the fort; and afforded, in consequence of its broken banks, irregular ravines, and low jungle, a complete protection on this side also. On the western face was a dense jungle, creeping up nearly to the wall—of a description certainly to afford cover to

an assailing party in that direction, but the ground was too broken to admit of proper formation of troops, except at one spot, where there were some scattered huts—a petty deserted bazar, from which ran an approach to a small gateway and diminutive wicket, close under the south-west bastion. The main entrance itself to the fort was, however, in the centre of the south curtain of the wall, almost in front of the group of officers, who, from a short distance, were thus forming an estimate of the strength of the works. This face was clearly the only approachable part of the whole, unless we except the smaller gateway and wicket to the left, and which seemed to communicate only with a separate and distinct angle of the fort, used probably for the *zenánah*, or personal residence of the killedar. The fort itself was a simple mud-built quadrangle, with bastions at each angle. Each face might be about one hundred and fifty or one hundred and eighty feet, and the

general height of the curtain, which, though in tolerable repair, was anything but regular, might be about thirty feet. The walls were thick, with a breast-work on them of four or five feet, behind which might be seen numbers of the garrison leaning on the parapets and watching the sepoy camp before them. There were stout-looking *juwauns* armed to the teeth; and on the bastions could be made out a few ginjals and wall-pieces on swivels, carrying about twelve or twenty ounce balls.

The position occupied by the group of English officers, which was one of the occasional slight eminences formed by the broken banks of the river, gave them a pretty correct view of the entire fort and its defences, and of the country in its vicinity. The sun was fast sinking over the jungle to the left, but its rays were still gleaming on the upper portion of the works, and glancing fitfully upon the arms of the men crowded along the walls. The

river to the right was just sinking into shade, though there were a few scanty spots upon the opposite side, where the light still lingered, and whither the lengthened shadows, now flung far by the fort itself and high banks, had not yet reached. On these, occasionally, were seen gliding past the light skiffs of the fishermen, for the first time for many years, pursuing their quiet course, unchallenged and unimpeded by a ready plunderer or claimant of toll, from among the busy followers of the killedar.

Far behind the whole scene, and above the misty and grey horison, rose magnificently amidst the very clouds, (and, indeed, cloud-like themselves, distinguishable only by the frequent bright tints, sharp and crisp, as a painter would describe them, scattered over their wavy eminences), the majestic heights of the snowy Himalaya. They were seldom visible at this season of the year; but a slight storm and north-wester of the

preceding evening had cleared away the usual sullen haziness of the atmosphere, and added much to the present distinctness and beauty of the scene.

"Well, Crump, my boy—that's a brave sketch you're making;" said an Artillery Sub, looking over the shoulder of the Ensign,—"clap in a few more pencil dashes on the walls, for spears 'fierce bristling.' You are not half warlike enough.—Why, if I were sketching for my posterity a fort, where I was to have a broken head the next morning, I'd leave a relic fit to frighten folks. *Your* fort is as bland and as peaceful as one of our amateurs' new drops at the Chowringhee!"

"I'm making it as I found it," answered Crump, interrupted in his sketch, and not half liking the idea of the broken head for the ensuing morning.

"Oh! stop—don't put it up yet," cried the other; "stay for the old Major. Here he comes with a spy-glass, and you may

soon put him in, in gaunt prominence, on the foreground. He'll serve to frighten folks with that black phiz of his, if the fort won't."

"Well, gentlemen," said the Commandant, approaching them, "are you all ready to take the stings out of that hornet's nest to-morrow?"

"You intend to try it to-morrow, Major?" observed a hoary respectable looking Captain of the group.

"Indeed, do I," returned the Major. "The Adjutant will have the orderly book ready for you all, in a few moments; and it is odd if we do not thin those clustering rascals before they are a day older. "Attend now," said the old gentleman, waving his hand so as to draw his hearers in a circle around him, "I'll tell you how we are to manage it. You'll understand my plans the better for a little *vivâ voce* explanation,—with the fort, too, before us."

"You, Captain Oldboy, will lead the right

wing on to the main-gate. You see the approach to it.—Stand here, and you can make out that the ground sinks and descends just before the gate itself. You'll draw out your men within easy musket reach of the fort, so as to clear the walls of these vagabonds; while Mr. Topaz with his artillerymen will run his gun right at the *durwazu*. You'll back him bravely I know; and if the gate is to be forced, he is the man to shiver it; and you will then immediately close in, and push your grenadiers at the fellows. The Light Bobs we'll have on the crest of the ravine to the right here, to pepper away as they shew themselves:—and the other gun we will station at the huts to the left, and see if we can catch an opportunity to try its metal on the little western gate, in the rear of yonder bastion.—Captain Rust and Ensign Rivers will be there with their company to support the 6-pounder and take advantage of its movements. And now, gentlemen," added

the Commanding Officer—the tone of his voice here suddenly growing deeper, and *harsher* if possible—"you will bear in mind that our object is to make a serious example of this killedar. 'Tis the only way to bring our present service to a conclusion. If they stand an obstinate assault"—his tone becoming still deeper, and his words slower, and, as the Artillery Sub Topaz afterwards declared, his whole physiognomy shewing blacker and blacker—"*you'll do your duty,*" said he, with one of those significant bendings of the brow which told plainer than a hundred tongues the doom of the poor devils in the mud walls before them.

"The Nawaub's troops?"—enquired Captain Oldboy.

"Will be posted to the right, and rear of the fort, along the river; and also thrown into yonder jungle to the left, to cut off every soul that would escape us."

There was a pause for a few moments. No one seemed inclined to make farther

remarks; and the sun at this moment went down redly and sullenly, for the last time, it appeared, on many of the deluded followers of the killedar; and perhaps the last also for not a few of those preparing to give effect to the death-warrant thus issued against two or three hundred—but I will not call them unoffending—fellow creatures.

At the mess-tent during the evening nothing particular occurred. One or two of the youngsters of the regiment endeavoured, as might be perceived, to be more noisy and facetious than usual, but their attempts were generally abortive. The older hands got, for a time, into grave, but seemingly unexciting, conversation:—at last a chance observation led them to home and to early recollections of their native country.—It was strange, but at that moment all at the table became exclusively interested in this topic, and there was an affectionate tone of natural feeling pervading the whole of the conversation,—even from ancient Oldboy,

the hoary-headed captain, a cadet of the last century, down to the very *griffin* of the party, young Ensign Rivers. The same thing has not been unprecedented elsewhere on other occasions of like approaching exertion and danger;—as if the heart, ere it nerved itself for deeds of daring energy, loved to repose awhile amid its native recollections, and the soothing of the earlier sympathies of our nature, like the calm stillness that reigns around ere the rousing of the storm blast; or, the more insidious langour in the human frame itself, that precedes how often the busy raging of the too fatal fever.

All had retired to rest. Lieut. Topaz, of the Artillery, was sleeping in his dooly-cot on one side of a single-poled tent, and Ensign Crump, his chum for the time being, was in a deep slumber on his camp charpoy on the other side of the tent pole. It was a little past midnight, when Topaz was awakened by a light coming in at the

door-way, and immediately afterwards, the *cheek* was raised, and Ensign Rivers, a fine young lad of the regiment, entered the tent with a lantern in his hand.

'Hullo!' growled forth Topaz—"what brings you here at this time of night, Master Boots?"—for so the Ensign was designated in the regiment, as the last comer into its ranks.

The youth hesitated and stammered, as if doubtful how to introduce his present purpose. "Can't you speak, man?" continued Topaz, barely awake, and not over-pleased with the light flaring in his eyes.

"I came," faltered out the Ensign, "to ask you and Crump to be witnesses to a paper now with me. It requires three signatures: the Adjutant has given me his, and I now want your's and your chum's."

"You might as well have got it two hours ago, my young gent," said the Artilleryman, "and I should have gone on better with my first sleep. But come," he added, after

one or two outstretchings of his arms, and getting better humoured in his tone, "let us have your paper;—there is ink in that desk on the table. What paper is it, Rivers?"

"Lord! it an't time yet," muttered Crump, sitting up in his bed, and awakened by the voices in the tent.

The boy Rivers hesitated at first, the more as Crump, was awakened, to answer the question of Topaz, but soon spreading the document out, a sheet of foolscap paper, carefully written down on one side, before the Lieutenant—"It's only my will," he replied. "I have been told in an Europe letter from my uncle, received some weeks ago, to prepare it, and to be careful to get three signatures to attest the document; but I put it off from day to day, until at mess this night it occurred to me how cruelly remiss I had been——."

"There it is,—my sign manual then," interrupted the Lieutenant—"Tom Topaz;

and he must be a clever fellow who makes out what my pothooks are intended for."

"Oh, but you must give your rank and signature in full," observed Rivers. "My uncle——."

"D—n your uncle. I should like him to be roused out after twelve o'clock to attest deeds at full length, as if figuring away at the end of a monthly muster roll. I say, Crump, now for your part of the play," exclaimed he, throwing over the ink-filled pen on the sheet of Ensign Crump's bedding.

The Ensign by this time was wide awake, and had gathered from the little that had passed, what was required of him. He signed the will without a word, and immediately turned himself on his pillow, and with his back to the light, tried to compose himself again to the sleep from which he had been so unwillingly disturbed.

Rivers sat down on the bed-side by Topaz. He was silent for a few minutes,—

but when the hard breathing of his brother Ensign told him that Crump was in a happy state of disregard of all mundane matters—"I'll tell you what this paper is, good Topaz," said he; "you may have heard that I have a little landed and other property at home, which is at my disposal at the age of eighteen. I was eighteen three months ago, and now I have made it over to my mother for life, in this deed, which will answer either for that purpose at any rate, or as my last testament in case of accident to-morrow. I was very culpable, Topaz, in neglecting the thing till now."

Topaz said nothing; his eye was resting kindly on the face of the youth. Rivers saw it, and his heart responded to the feeling. All at once he abruptly, but in a low tone, exclaimed—"My dear Topaz, will you promise not to laugh at me. I am not afraid of to-morrow—indeed no—but there

is something I would fain say to you before it approaches. You go home on furlough next year, don't you, Topaz?"

"Yes, please the pigs, my little boots," said the Lieutenant.

"Well then, promise me one thing—one thing Topaz?"

"What is it, man?"

"It is not much," continued the other. "Will you go to my poor mother, Topaz, at Bath—if—I ————"—he paused.

"Hop the twig to-morrow," interjected the other; "why, I am as likely as yourself, my fine fellow, to do that comfortable thing, and perhaps more so."

"Nay but promise me. And will you—after to-morrow—remember that in a secret draw in the upper part of my writing desk is a locket, a small minature locket, with hair behind it. I wish you to take it to a" —there was no little hesitation in the youngster's manner—"to a young lady

who is staying with my mother — her niece" ——

"And your cousin, eh?" significantly interrupted the Lieutenant.

"Yes, my cousin: her name is Clara Rivers. Will you give her the locket and say I begged you to take it, and to add, that I—that——"

"You still love her dearly. Rivers, is this it?" said Topaz, in a kindlier tone than his rough voice usually assumed. "Well, my dear lad, suppose I promise."——

"Then," exclaimed the other, "you will indeed do me a brother's kindness. God bless you, Topaz—thank you, thank you." And without a word more he gave the huge hand of his companion a confiding and affectionate pressure, and gently retreated to his own little routee.

The bugle sounded the reveillee in the morning at the usual hour, as if nothing extraordinary were in agitation, and the drum-call in due time assembled the men

of the detachment on parade. The extra ammunition had been served out the preceding evening, the different columns and divisions for the attack accurately told off, and little remained in the morning but for the men to fall in and await the order to advance. The two pieces of artillery, with their tumbrils and full equipments, were in the front; the European privates grouped beside them, their necks uncovered and collars thrown back, their white cotton jackets half unbuttoned, and a few of them with their trowsers tucked up, and their ungaitered well proportioned limbs forming a pretty strong contrast with the attenuated and curved supporters of the lascars and bullock-drivers beside them. The Artillery men were in high spirits, laughing and jesting with each other, and eager for the *spree*, as they called it. Our countrymen, in all parts of the world, are seldom backward on an occasion of the kind; and in various of the assaults to which they were

led in the Peninsula, they betrayed a fearlessness and reckless disregard of opposing danger—more than to match the brightest records of chivalrous devotion handed down to us from the olden ages. But in India, their bearing, under such circumstances, has frequently shown itself in a wild, more daring and ungovernable rushing at the worst—a passionate desire to grapple with it in utter disregard of *all* human opposition. As if our countrymen, in their contempt of the natives, and in their believing them to be less than human, wished to exhibit themselves, to the Asiatics, as something more:—and as "*nec Deus intersit*," in these degenerate, unpoetic days in our earthly broils and battles, they are content to enact in India, for the time being, the desperate dramatis personæ of devils incarnate. Walled in, and cooped together in a barrack; checked there, and controuled at times,—next petted, and coarsely pampered, their spirits and seeming

strength sinking beneath the climate, while their passions and most excitable energies are the more irritated and hourly roused as their moral ones are deteriorating and decaying;—loose these poor brave fellows from their years of confinement, and set them at the work for which they were designed, and are panting—if only to give them release from barrack discipline and confinement,—and at once, like the bull-dog, fairly slipped at his victim, they dash at him with an instinctive fierceness and alacrity, incredible save to those who have witnessed their almost fiend-like or super-human efforts. Much may be attributed to their always having the post of honor among their native fellow soldiers, and to the feeling that it would be a stigma upon them to do no more than others under these inspiring distinctions. Whatever the cause, one thing is certain,—that, whatever effect the climate may have on the constitution and power of the European soldier,—however it leave his

outward appearance emaciated and unnerved, —still there is a soul of vivacious and unconquerable superiority in the white man which no exile nor sickness can quench! Like the steel of his own daring weapons, the heat of the furnace may have blackened and defaced, nay reduced, the iron mass that originally gave it; yet it hath so steeled and tempered the residue, that though it bend beneath the blow it would inflict, it still cuts deeper and fiercer for its ordeal.

To the right was now stationed the Light Company: on an order from the Major, it filed off to the crest of the ravine, and extending its files there awaited the order for further operations.

On the left was posted Captain Rust's Company and our young friend Ensign Rivers, and at the same time with the movement of the Light Company, it proceeded to the huts to the westward and occupied a position under cover of them before the little *zenánah* wicket we have

before mentioned. The gun did not accompany it, but for the present was to remain with its companion to cover it while they were running it down to the main gate in the front face. Captain Oldboy with four companies, was steadily in line in front of the encampment, when the Major observing that the two companies on the flanks had taken up their necessary positions, and hearing from the rear of the fort a bugle-call intended to apprise him, as concerted, that His Majesty of Oude's troops had arranged themselves along the western jungle, and on the river behind the rear face of the fort, he rode up to the Captain and told him to put his men in motion. He did the same to Lieutenant Topaz with the guns. There was no attempt at speechifying; he just pointed to the Fort and said to the Artillery men—"My lads, you'll do your duty;" and then turning round to the Sepoys, exclaimed in Hindoostanee—"Now shew what the old *juwan-ha-pultan* is made of," (calling the Corps

by its own familiar soubriquet,) "and let us teach these Rajcoomar rascals what the Company's Sepahees can do!" The order was given. By a simple evolution the late line was converted into a dense column, and at once the division, guns and all, leaving only about one hundred and fifty men under arms to act as a reserve, and remain in the camp, marched on briskly, detouring a little to the left, to avoid the head of the ravine in front and gain the road at once leading on to the gate. There was an evident bustle now, and crowding on the southern wall of the fort,—the smoke of the numerous lighted matches was slowly rising in the morning air from the crest of the parapet, and the thick masses of the garrison were plainly watching these movements in breathless anticipation, but delaying their fire, and, as if intentionally, determined not to strike the first blow. "I hope the chaps will continue in this mind, Topaz," said the Major to the Lieutenant with the

leading gun, and by whose side he was riding, as they now got within easy match-lock reach. "If they will only be good-natured enough to allow the muzzle of your gun to touch their gate timber before they open a fire on us, I think the first bark of your little friend there will save them much trouble, by making something else open for us."

"See they are waving us back, Major," said Topaz.

"Let them signalise as much as they please. It must be somewhat more" said the Major, making a mock *salam*, in reply to the numerous arms waving for him to retire, "that must send us now methinks to the right about."

"Be ready to deploy, Captain Oldboy," called out the Major, looking back at the advancing sepoy column.

"We are all ready, Sir."

Still they advanced, and there was evidently much stir on the fort walls. The

endeavours of some one in authority were distinctly observed,—keeping quiet a few of the garrison who were pointing their pieces and anxious to commence firing. At length it appeared that the more eager and fiery among them carried the day, for in spite of prohibition, a few shots fell smartly among the leading files, and in a moment or two the whole front of the fort was peppering away in the unbroken *urrhing* sort of sound of a well-sustained file-fire. The Major's horse was the first to feel the effect: a ball struck it on the mane and wounded the upper part of the neck. It reared immediately, and the good old man was fain to dismount and send his charger away to the rear, to the no small comfort and felicitation of the syce, who affected not this close quarter style of operations. They were by this time little more than sixty paces from the gate. The order was given for the sepoys to deploy, which they did admirably, and in less than a minute

they were in line in favorable positions, and blazing away in good set style, and not a little silencing the late heavy fire of the gentry on the walls. The second gun behind that of Topaz was now promptly placed in the centre of the line, and quick as lightning, its flashes were darting from it, and grape, cannister, and shrapnell were pouring from its mouth, to the tune of some three or four rounds of each, while the leading six-pounder, admirably conducted by Topaz, and under cover of the fire, was fairly run into the commencement of the descent immediately leading to the gate. Here an unexpected obstacle opposed itself:—a deep ditch had been dug across the path, the preceding evening, nearly five feet wide, proportionably deep, and the opposite part of it well *frised* with pointed stake. The fire of the fort was redoubled at the moment:—three of the Europeans were tumbled over, and the garrison shouted in exultation! Not a moment was to be lost.

The Major from the line saw the pause, and sent a company down to support the gun, but Topaz by this time had ordered the disengagement of some spare planks from the tumbril behind, and, throwing them across the ditch, soon forced the gun with their aid beyond the obstruction, and getting into the descent, speedily ran it down the gate. While in that situation close under the wall, he was perfectly safe for the time from the efforts of the garrison. All this, however, had not occurred, until four more of the artillerymen, and at least a dozen of the lascars and covering sepoys had been added to the poor fellows who were stretched on the earth struggling in agony in front of the little ditch in the pathway. There were still hands enough to work the gun in its present snug situation, and bang went its smothered and suppressed report against the timbers of the entrance. From the position of the troops

nothing could be seen but a mass of dense white smoke now enveloping the gateway; —loud pealed another discharge, the louder always for being confined and straitened in its operation. A third report—the Grenadiers were already in columns of subdivisions ready to bound forward. A fourth peal from the gun, and a crash, and a loud hurra and shout from the party working it! The sepoys dashed on, heedless of the tenfold encreased angry fire of the now desperate combatants on the walls! All seemed our own, but the troops had a little yet to get over, ere they could profit by the gateway being battered and burst open. The garrison had not only implanted huge trunks of trees in the earth behind the planking of the gates, but had stockaded the whole, in rear of the entrance, so that a new difficulty arose, and the few who crept in through the splintered opening were fain to withdraw again from the heavy

fire kept up by fellows on *mauchauns* along the stockading, and wait the coming up of bamboo ladders from the rear.

In the mean time the little detachment to the left had boldly left its covert of the huts, and the moment the second gun could be spared from its office of protecting and covering the first advance of the other, they had moved it to the westward, and run it to the small wicket there described, and applying the muzzle and plank to it, the second discharge laid open the wicket, but the *wicket* only, not larger than the same small low description of durwan's entrance observable in the gates of our fashionable Calcutta edifices. The gun was here under a serjeant, and the whole by this time commanded only by young Rivers, for his Captain had been shot through the shoulder in the advance to the wall. The men from the bastion were firing down sharply on the clustering group of assailants gathering around the wicket. Rivers placed

a division to the left to keep down their fire for a few moments, while his men one by one could creep into the scanty opening made for them. An Artillery-man led the way: He was knocked over the instant he entered. The Serjeant followed, and was served the precise same. A Sepoy, who bent down and went after him, bit the dust, and another, and another met the same fate. The space was cleared now between Rivers and the wicket,—he had been encouraging the entrance of these gallant, almost victimised, fellows,—he felt ashamed to call more forward—and while, with a stout and yet truly foreboding heart, he prepared to stoop for his own admission though this seeming certain passage to death, he called out to the Subadar near him to bring in after him the men as quickly and instantaneously as possible. He bent down,—he placed his head and foot at the same moment within the entrance—and a thick pattering of shots whizzed hail-like

about him. He was untouched! He sprung in with an exulting cry, and wave of his sabre—but the next instant saw him staggering and falling to the earth—a ball had passed through his thigh, and another had injured his other limb below the knee. A loud shout and fierce cries were heard at this juncture from the other part of attack. They had cleared the obstacle it was evident, and the fire immediately at hand ceased for a brief space. Men poured in at this momentary pause though the wicket,—and there before them, on a raised platform or *muchaun*, directly in front of the entrance, was the cause of the late slaughter,—an old man and half a dozen or more of the garrison on the platform, while others beneath were handing them loaded matchlocks. At the entrance of the sepoys the companions of the aged combatant endeavoured to escape by a loose plank connecting the *muchaun* with an open window of a pucka building behind it. The assailants

observed their escape, and rushing forward, soon disposed of the few below the platform, and with the halberds of the Havildars displaced the loose plank, which had served the fugitives for a bridge of present safety. The old man still remained on the eminence, and taking up coolly, one by one, the matchlocks which had been left behind, was aiming such as he found loaded, with fatal precision on the Sepoys below him. '*Mar*'—'*mar*,' '*mar*!' exclaimed the infuriated assailants. "*Ag lugou*," cried an ancient Naik, and at once firing some straw with one of their muskets, they applied it to the combustible and frail materials forming the scaffolding in which the murderous old Killedar (for such he was) was himself tiger-like at bay, still dealing wounds and death around him. The sepoys were almost to a man, too hurried and excited to load their own pieces,—all were pressing forward as the fire quickly ascended the uprights of the platform, to

secure, and impinge their victim on their bayonets, immediately his fast-failing tenement and retreat were brought to the earth. The fire curled up around the very person of the poor old devoted rebel—his white beard was singing in the flame;—at once, seizing a sword, he sprang downward on a small opening among his destroyers, where fewer bayonets seemed to bristle beneath him. It was from an height of fifteen feet:—no wonder he alighted not upon his feet, and before he could regain them, at least half a dozen bayonets were pinning him fiercely to the earth. In vain he struggled or wounded those nearest him.—The Major who entered the wicket at that fearful moment (having silenced all opposition at the main-gate) saw his arch-enemy here writhing beneath the steel of his many opponents. One of them was removing his bayonet for the purpose of imbedding it again, more effectually, in some more vital part, but the weapon was too firmly fixed;

it would not quit its hold. The soldier had placed his foot against his victim, at that moment engaged with some other tormentor, to assist in forcing out the steel. The Major shrieked out to him to desist; —the bleeding Ensign Rivers, too, was dragging himself forward on the earth like a wounded snake, to endeavour, if possible, to save, or rather to protect the last moments of the Killedar,—but the sepoy had now loosened his musket by disengaging it from the bayonet, which he left buried in the breast of the struggling wretch, and was savagely reversing his firelock to beat in the brow of his victim, when the old Major rushed forward, and with his aged yet nervous hand and sword-hilt, struck down the sepoy to the dust. The Killedar saw the merciful act,—his eye caught, too, the approach, under a similar kindly intention, of the wounded Ensign. His sword fell from his grasp—his eye, late glaring with the ire of a stricken tiger,—his

brow, late speaking but death, and dark defiance, suddenly sank into the soft beseeming of gratefulness, and of betokened kindness and feeling. His hand pointed to the open lattice of the pukha *zenanah* above, and his lips faltered the faint beseeching prayer '*buchao*'—save my family. He heard the brief—"I will, I will" of his enemy,—and at once an almost happy and benign smile lightened up the features of the dying man. He lifted his hand as if to *salaam* his thanks; but the hand itself sank in the motion undirected, unbidden and *lifeless* on his brow, for his spirit at that moment had parted for ever!*

* We are not quite satisfied at here closing the tale. But we are somewhat in the secret:—and are happy to be able to add, in farther elucidation of these events, which may not be the less interesting for being mainly founded on fact, that the family of the old Killeedar were protected, that Ensign Crump did *not* in the affray get the broken head so pleasantly anticipated for him by Lieut. Topaz; but that Ensign Rivers' wounds were found so slow to heal, that he was sent the following year to England, where he completely recovered. He married his cousin

Clara, and what is still better, succeeded to considerable property, resigned the service, and is now enjoying himself in his native county of Somersetshire, and is as happy, he writes word to his old Corps, as his best friends could wish him.

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